

JOURNAL WRITING IN KINDERGARTEN

By

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I would like to
dedicate this study to my father,
Ellis White,
who inspired my
love for teaching.

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The purpose of this study was to describe how kindergarten children respond to writing in a journal on a daily basis. The data collection consisted of recording descriptions of the types of interactions which occurred and how these interactions influenced the writing process.

The sample included five kindergarten children who wrote in journals with their peers in a learning center in the classroom. The teacher wrote a response to each child's writings each night. The researcher was a participant observer who recorded the entire journal writing process daily.

Observations centered around both the children's verbal interactions during writing and their oral and written responses to the comments and questions written in their journals by the teacher. In analyzing the data the researcher recycled new observations to develop several

domains for in-depth study. An examination of interaction taxonomies and the adult's responses to the child's written dialogue suggested the focus for description.

The present study produced two main findings which are of critical importance to a whole language approach of speaking, listening, writing, and reading. *First, journal writing promoted the children's understanding that writing can communicate a message or a story. As the study progressed the children acquired the ability to converse in writing with the teacher and to produce stories and personal narratives.* Second, verbal interactions with self and peers supported the journal writing process and helped children develop a sense of audience.

Children responded to the teacher's written exchanges in their journals for the following purposes: to keep their stories alive, as reading material, and as models for conventional writing patterns to guide their writing. When children wrote, drew, and interacted while working in the journals complete stories and messages emerged.

Teachers need to provide a minimum of two months for journal writing, encourage children to interact during writing episodes, use techniques that motivate children to write, and provide parents with information about their children's writing.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

An observer who enters a basic skills kindergarten classroom encounters children using a wide variety of materials and activities designed to teach readiness skills. Children are likely to be involved in learning letters, sounds, handwriting, auditory discrimination, visual discrimination, and other subskills considered important for reading readiness. A hierarchy of basic skills is the basis of the curriculum. Results of various readiness tests determine mastery of readiness skills. Teachers are likely to use workbooks and duplicated materials as part of a basal reading program. Letter identification, letter sounds, and other readiness skills are taught in isolation for later use when "real" learning begins. Writing is often limited to learning to write the letters of the alphabet. Practice of these reading and writing skills is based on the belief that the purpose of kindergarten is to focus on the skills necessary for learning that begins in first grade. Holdaway (1979) points out that, by isolating skills, teaching tends to focus "on superficial, perpetual, and mechanical aspects rather than on integrated function" (1979, p. 26) of whole language.

‡ An alternative approach to the area of language arts in the kindergarten curriculum is to consider kindergarten as one year in a child's continuous growth in the ability to communicate through oral language, reading, and writing.* This approach to teaching communication is often called a whole language approach and is one way to respond to reconceptualizing language readiness in the kindergarten curriculum. A whole language approach is becoming more popular among teachers across the country. The National Teachers Applying Whole Language (TAWL) group, a teacher support group for whole language experiences, met at the International Reading Association in 1987 (D. Goodman, 1987). During this meeting, goals were created which included establishing communication among whole language groups, supporting groups through various resources, and developing viewpoints which can be presented at government and public meetings. Because a whole language approach is breaking away from the basics movement, support groups are helpful in encouraging change and contesting criticism from peers, parents, and administrators (Jacobson, 1987).

Whole language is a philosophical approach that integrates four language areas: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. It is a "term which is used to refer to reading and writing instruction which utilizes complete texts in communicative situations as contrasted with focused skills practice on the use of 'phonics' or

isolated language drill" (Clarke, 1987, p. 396). In a whole language approach, reading and writing are viewed as an extension of language development. Clarke (1987), K.S. Goodman (1986), K.S. Goodman and Goodman (1981), Holdaway (1979), and Newman (1985) concur that a whole language approach has common characteristics. The focus of reading, writing, speaking, and listening is to provide meaning for communicative purposes. Language is kept in context. Function or content is emphasized over form. Where the whole language approach is used, classrooms tend to be centered around the interests of the child. Teachers capitalize on the child's literary abilities by acting as guides or facilitators. Progress of the child is monitored by observation and artifacts rather than by tests of isolated skills. Examples of whole language activities include shared reading, reading out loud, role playing, and dictating stories.

Teale and Sulzby (1986) report that the development of a child's written language from birth to school age has been ignored. It is only in recent years that researchers have looked at the writing abilities of these younger children. Materials used in the school setting today, such as workbooks and skills-oriented learning centers, are based on an adult perspective of the prerequisite skills necessary for writing, rather than from a developmental perspective. "Real" instruction in writing comes after the subskills have

been introduced. Recent research (Bissex, 1980; Holdaway, 1979; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Hall, 1987) indicates the need to revise thinking about readiness. A developmental model of emergent literacy is more appropriate (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Developmental learning can be defined as the natural type of learning the young child encounters before schooling. This concept can be illustrated by the young child of 2 or 3 years of age learning how to handle a book. The child learns where the story begins and how to read the pictures. Learning occurs without a formal teaching lesson. The child learns from observing and modeling another person engaged in the task (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). This developmental model presumes that many children know a great deal about print from their home and community before formal instruction begins. The child learns about print from books and exposure to printed material and signs in the environment.

Teale and Sulzby (1986) believe that, by using whole language as a developmental model, the child grows as a writer and reader. In this way all phases of literacy--including writing, reading, and spoken language--develop concurrently. Children become aware that literacy has functional uses which are used in communication. Children learn writing from being involved in a variety of opportunities to use print and seeing models of adult literacy (Bissex, 1980; Holdaway, 1979; Teale & Sulzby,

1986). Models include family members writing letters, notes, grocery lists, bills, and other types of paperwork.

Graves (1983), in his study of elementary classroom writing, found there is a complex interplay between the talking, drawing, reading, and writing used during composing stories or messages. Meaning is discovered during the process. Graves' (1983) research has confirmed the belief that writing is not a sequential mastery of individual skills, but rather a gradual refinement during the child's development in the whole language process.

* Children can write long before they master all the conventions of writing (Bissex, 1980; Calkins, 1980; Clay, 1977; Dyson, 1986; Hall, 1987). Writing which was typically left to the elementary years is now being introduced in kindergarten (Dyson, 1986, 1988; Green, 1984; Hipple, 1985). Children in kindergarten are given the opportunity to write in the classroom. Many kindergarten classrooms have an area with markers, pens, pencils, and crayons, so that children can experiment with drawing and writing.

As early as their first scribbles on paper, babies are producing writing. In order to write messages, children need to know that written language is used to communicate (K.S. Goodman, 1986; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Once children realize there is a message in what they scribble, draw, or write, the early roots of written language are beginning to develop. To be specific, K.S. Goodman (1986) described

these early roots as the development of an awareness of print through scribbling, drawing, and marking on paper, and through recognizing environmental print. Once the child is able to understand that signs in the environment are symbols which can be used to communicate, signs influence the child's behavior and can be used to obtain what the child needs. For example, a 2-year-old might be highly influenced by a McDonald's sign and use that recognition to obtain French fries. Signs become part of the child's first encounter with literacy and language being used as a whole.

The awareness that a picture carries a message and subsequently that print conveys a message is well established by five years of age if children come from homes where literacy is valued and shared with them (Bissex, 1980; Dyson, 1986; Hall, 1987). Children seem to have more confidence in their ability to write than read because writing is visible (Dyson, 1986). Children are able to talk about writing and, when asked, confirm that they think they can write.

Researchers are aware that writing is a part of a whole language approach. Kindergarten children are able to write and believe they are able to write. Many kindergarten children also realize that print is a form of communication. Therefore, it is reasonable to build upon the kindergarten classroom as a place to continue the developmental learning about writing. The kindergarten curriculum can provide

writing activities such as making signs, notes, letters, cards, and dictated stories as well as providing the opportunity to write short phrases, sentences, or stories (Bissex, 1980; Dyson, 1986, 1988; Green, 1984; Hipple, 1985).

* Journal writing is another writing activity which successfully occurs in kindergarten classrooms. Journal writing is one method of implementing a whole language approach to foster the integration of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Hipple, 1985; Taylor, 1983). In particular, journal writing serves the function of emphasizing that pictures, thoughts, and ideas can be recorded. *

Journals are places to write down language. As Fulweiler suggests, journals "provide a place in which to write informally yet systematically in order to seek, discover, speculate and figure things out" (1987, p. 9). One type of journal is the dialogue journal, which is a conversational form of writing between the student and the teacher. As Statom (1987) suggests, by using dialogue journals children learn that writing is talk written down and that writing is a powerful form of communication. The critical characteristics of dialogue journals are that they are used to form interactions and make reading, writing, listening, and speaking an integrated whole language experience. Observing children engaged in writing journals

provides information on how children respond to a whole language method (K.S. Goodman, 1986). The journals used in the present study are similar to dialogue journals. The critical difference is that in conventional dialogue journals children and teachers exchange personal information. In journals described in the present study, children use writing to exchange messages and to develop stories, as well as to impart personal information through conversing with the teacher. The influence of journal writing on writing behavior is also explored in this paper.

The purpose of this project was to study the use of journals as a whole language approach to writing in a kindergarten. Since reading, writing, and language develop concurrently, journal writing provides information about writing development. The primary purpose of the research was to record what happens when kindergarten children in a predominantly basic skills classroom are given the opportunity to write about information, events, or real or imaginary stories daily in journals. The study results provide information about what children learn through journal writing, how children respond to writing in their journals, and how teachers help them in this process.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarity the following terms are defined according to their use in the study:

The basic skills approach is a learning method based on children mastering a hierarchy of reading readiness skills such as recognition of letters and sounds, visual discrimination, and auditory discrimination.

Journals are 8 1/2 by 11 inch booklets consisting of 10 blank pages with a construction paper cover. On the cover are the child's name and the words Writing Book; for example, Shirley's Writing Book. Writing in the journals provides daily interaction between the teacher and a child in a journal for the purpose of communicating information, events, and stories based on reality or fantasy.

Interactions with adults are verbal interactions between a child and either the researcher or the teacher during journal writing.

Interactions with peers are verbal interchanges between children during journal writing.

Interactions with self are nondirected statements children make for their own purposes, without regard to peers or adults, during journal writing.

Invented spellings are unconventional spellings which a child uses during the journal writing process for the purpose of communicating a message or story.

The whole language approach is a child-centered, philosophical approach to language arts which uses language in context by integrating reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

A writing center is an area of the classroom which includes a long rectangular table approximately 10 inches off the floor where children sit on the floor to write; boxes of writing tools such as markers, crayons, pencils, and pens, and each child's journal.

Questions

The following question was posed at the beginning of the study: How do children respond to journal writing as a whole language writing method when used in a kindergarten writing center? Three additional questions were developed during the study to provide focus for the description.

1. What types of interactions occur among the kindergarten children and among the children and the adults at the writing center while working in the journals?

2. How do these interactions influence children's writing behaviors?

3. What kinds of written interactions occur between the kindergarten children and their teacher and the kindergarten children and the participant observer during journal writing?

Significance of the Study

Many kindergarten classes still have a basic skills, hierarchy of readiness skills, orientation. However, teachers are beginning to recognize the need for a whole

language approach (K.S. Goodman, 1986). Therefore, it is important to document methods which attempt whole language. According to Newman (1985)

it is only by observing language in use, by watching language users, that our own understanding of language can grow. And it is only from such an understanding that we will be able to make curricular decisions which better match our students' intuition about how language works.
(p. 36)

This study documents one whole language approach, journal writing, in a kindergarten classroom.

Researchers have shown how children develop as writers (Dyson, 1986; Harste, Burke, & Woodward, 1981; Newman, 1983), but relatively little is known about how they develop through a specific curricular innovation such as journal writing. In Kawakami-Arakaki's (1988) investigation of the use of process writing as a teaching component, findings indicate that process writing consists of three phases: pre-writing discussion, writing, and conferring and sharing. Although the process writing worked well in the lab school, when the method was transferred to a public school setting it was not implemented correctly and was modified to fit within the classroom. Two reasons were given for different implementations in the public school and lab school. The public school teachers lacked knowledge about acceptable responses to writing and lacked understanding about goals. Lab school teachers were more experienced with writing.

Information gathered in this study adds to the body of knowledge about writing development and will help teachers respond to the kindergarten child's writing.

In a study by Fischman (1988) he explored the teaching practices of teachers with students grades K-4 in process writing based on peer coaching. Findings indicate that kindergarten teachers need to have their role in the teaching of process writing clarified more fully than the other teachers. The teacher must understand and recognize the stages of writing development of different children writing about many topics. Teachers in the kindergarten setting must react and respond to situations which cannot be preplanned.

Knowledge from this study documents that learning during journal writing occurs through interactions with peers, interactions with self, and written teacher-child interactions and provides kindergarten teachers with information about how and why to incorporate dialogue journals in the curriculum.

Dialogues between teacher and child in journals elicit information on writing as a form of communication. Recording interactions among children and between children and adults provides knowledge about how children develop as writers, how they plan their writing, and how peers and adults influence their writing. The study provides an in-depth analysis of kindergarten journal writing.

Teale and Sulzby (1986) have suggested that, since the study of emergent literacy is in its infancy, it is necessary to become very involved with description in order to build a basis for sound theory. Goodman (1981) pointed out that all teachers should become "kidwatchers" who are constantly observing the process of emerging literacy in education. By observing, and interacting during the journal writing process, it becomes possible to understand what children are attempting to do and how they can be helped to learn (Newman, 1985).

The Study

The research presented took place in a kindergarten classroom which has a mixed philosophical orientation. County guidelines mandate the use of a basic skills curriculum which includes a tracking system of skills mastered by individual children, and the use of the Ginn basal series, as well as Alpha Time. The teacher also relied on other activities such as shared reading, reading out loud, role playing, and language experience stories which could be considered whole language activities. For this study another whole language activity, journal writing, was added. Because the transition from basic skills to whole language does not occur immediately, this classroom is perhaps typical in gradually incorporating more whole

language activities while gradually de-emphasizing the basic skills approach.

In order to facilitate introduction of the writing center, the following procedures were used. On day one of the study, all children attended the center in three groups of eight children. From each of the three groups, two children had been selected by the researcher to observe specifically during the study. During the remainder of the study, each group attended the center on a daily basis. The group composition was highly flexible in that children left the center if they finished early and stayed for additional time when necessary. When several children had left, other children were called to the center. If the teacher was not involved in other group activities, children were allowed to attend the center heterogeneously. When this occurred, the teacher made sure that no more than two of the focal children were at the center at one time. Children were permitted to select their own writing tools. Social interaction among the children who were writing was encouraged by the researcher and teacher.

The researcher investigated the use of journals to facilitate children's writing development. Journal writing as a whole language writing method engages children with print on a regular basis. Children attended the writing center in the classroom daily for a 9-week period. The writing center was equipped with markers, pencils, pens, and

crayons. Each child's journal was left in the writing center. Children worked on their journals in groups of eight to ten. Social interaction among the children was encouraged. As the children finished at least one page of their journals, they left the center and went to a different center. The researcher acted as a participant observer at the writing center. Information about writing development which occurred at the writing center was collected through notes, videotape recordings, and xeroxed copies of the children's writing. At the onset of the study a journal was given to each child. The journal consisted of 10 blank pages enclosed in a cover, with the child's name on the front. Children were told that the journals were a special place for their writing. They were also told that they could take their journals home when they were finished to share with their families. As part of their writing center activities they completed at least one page in their journal each day. Children had at least 30 minutes in which to write their story in their journal. They were encouraged to draw pictures in their journals, if they liked, and then write their informational message or story. The participant-observer or the teacher wrote what the child said was written on the page to clarify invented spellings to parents. The teacher briefly responded in writing to each child's journal to encourage writing as a form of communication rather than for evaluation purposes. For

example, a child's entry might have included a picture of an animal labeled, "M DG" for "My dog." The teacher responded in writing with "What do you like to do with your dog?" rather than "That is a nice picture." The teacher's dialogue response was read to each child immediately before they began to write.

After the completion of each journal, an individual letter was written to the parents on the front inside cover by the teacher with the assistance of the participant observer. The purpose of this letter was to help parents understand why writing is done in kindergarten. The letter explained what the child was doing and suggested ways to encourage and to respond to writing at home.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present an introduction to the research problem. Whole language was defined as a curriculum model which integrates the areas of writing, reading, listening, and speaking. The focal point of this study was writing as a form of communication or writing a story. Writing in journals by kindergarten children in this study was the specific way in which a whole language approach was used. Using journals in the classroom was one way of moving from a basic skills orientation to a whole language approach. By observing children, listening to their interactions, and watching their development as

writers, information on how children responded to journal writing as a whole language writing method was gathered. The kindergarten class used in this study was typical of many classrooms which are becoming oriented to whole language while decreasing emphasis on a basic skills curriculum. Children wrote in their journals with a small group of peers and either the teacher or the participant observer. In writing the dialogue question the teacher responded to their pictures and writing in a way which fostered further communication about their stories. Interaction among the children was highly encouraged.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research which has been conducted regarding writing in kindergarten and to explore areas which need further study. The first section describes the development of writing abilities in the young child and provides information about what kindergarten children do and learn in a writing situation. The second section describes the function of oral language in kindergarten writing. Peer and teacher-child interactions provide clues as to how children learn in a dialogue-writing program. Researchers have noted parallels between the way young children learn to talk and write. For young children talking provides meaning for written language. Writing as talk written down is also a concept that journal writing might develop in children. Drawing is also discussed in this chapter because it contributes to the writing process and often precedes the writing and gives direction. At the kindergarten level drawing is sometimes combined with writing and not easily differentiated from it. The next section of the chapter describes the function of invented spellings in writing development. In the following

section the impact of home background on literacy is addressed. The final section focuses on studies of kindergarten journal writing.

Children's Writing Development

As early as 1930, researchers attempted to analyze children's writing. The earliest researchers developed levels for handwriting. Currently the emphasis is on message formation. The movement from a child's scribbling and asking, "What does it say?" to the use of conventional writing is followed by researchers. In this section, research on writing development by Clay (1975); DeFord (1980); Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982); Harste, Burke, and Woodward (1981); Hildreth (1936); Newman (1983); Jones (1987); and Muscove (1987) will be reviewed.

In the early 1930s Hildreth (1936) looked at early writing and classified it into levels. Children in the sample had not been encouraged to engage in writing activities by their parents. Writing spontaneously developed between the ages 3 to 6. Each child's levels, ranging from 0 to 5, described increasing complexity, from scribbling to an approximation of true levels of conventional print. The 0 level occurred before 3 years and is characterized by unorganized scribbling. The scribbling in level 1 has more of a zigzag design and does not seem quite as aimless as in the previous level. In level 3,

there is a great variety of features in the different strokes. Level 4 writing looks more like real letters which are arranged in a linear fashion. Level 5 adds an occasional real letter to the writing. It is interesting to note that this research, done over 50 years ago, focused on handwriting and was not applied to and did not have an impact on children's natural writing abilities with respect to message formation.

In 1975, Clay addressed both handwriting and the message concept. Her research indicates that children from 3 to 5 usually become aware that people write messages and that they imitate this by scribbling, linear mock writing, and mock letters. The pleasure of scribbling develops into making marks of unknown meaning. At this stage the child is likely to ask an adult, "What does this say?" The next step is for the child to form a brief message and search for correct signs, symbols, or alphabet letters which resemble words. As a result of Clay's (1975) research of kindergarten children in New Zealand, she described principles and rules which are recurrent in the writings of young children. They are not necessarily linear by nature, but blend together in the child's writing.

1. The sign concept occurs early. It carries a string of meaningless messages.

2. The message concept is the first realization that what is spoken can also be written.

3. The copying principle occurs when the child attempts new words by copying. The child realizes that he knows some new words. This stage is quite evident when the kindergarten child copies bulletin board slogans and signs around the room. The child usually tires of this stage quickly and begins to invent. Invented spellings for words are a quicker way to make new discoveries.

4. The flexibility principle is evidenced when the child tries to write new words, play with print, or experiment with script and deviate from letter form.

5. The inventory principle is used to monitor and order the child's own learning. Often the child arranges his writing into letters or words.

6. In the recurring principle, words and symbols are often repeated in the writing. It is as if the child is providing himself with writing drills of letters and words.

7. The generating principle occurs when the child uses some elements and some rules to form new messages.

8. Patterns of left to right movements are termed directional principles. This includes directionality of letters, lines, and sequences of phrases. If there is not enough room on a line to finish a word or phrase, the child will wind it around the page.

9. The contrastive principle is used to create contrasts in meanings, words, and word patterns.

10. The functions of space in print are labeled the space concept.

11. The abbreviation principle refers to a child's use of abbreviations before he moves to conventional writing. In comparison with the research of Hildreth (1936), Clay's (1975) research not only addressed the area of handwriting, but also included concepts of writing and message formation.

DeFord (1980) investigated the writing of 50 2- to 7-year-old children and developed a framework for understanding writing development as follows:

1. In the scribbling stage, what appears as incoherent marks may be translated by the child as a letter or a story. The scribbling might be well organized and linear, with a knowledge of a rudimentary form of language.

2. The ability to differentiate between drawing and writing is a basic step in the process. This parallels Clay's sign concept.

3. Concepts of writing with respect to linearity, directionality, symmetry of symbols, and symbol-like qualities all form the next stage. This would parallel with Clay's category of mock writing and page arrangement.

4. Letters and letter-like shapes become more apparent as the children key in on letter characteristics in their writing.

5. Once the letters become better formed, an effort toward word spacing is used. Often these "words" are a

string of letters which do not represent conventional word patterns.

6. During this stage, writing known words and the development of sound symbols begins.

7. Simple sentences with the use of invented spellings might be constructed during this stage.

8. Sentences might be combined for short stories at this level.

9. Punctuation is used; this stage is similar to Clay's abbreviation principle.

10. In the final stage, stories, letters, and other forms of communication are written.

In a 2-year study of Argentinean children ranging in age from 4 to 6 years from varying socioeconomic groups, Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) described five levels of writing development. First, children reproduced what looks like writing and was often included in their drawings. Next, children acquired fixed graphics for writing. A number of characters which differed in number and variety were used in the writing sequence. In the third level, a sound was paired to each letter and each letter stood for a symbol. Next there was a move from syllabic usage to alphabetic. Children realized that they must have at least the same number of letters as syllables. The lower-class children in this study did not move into the next level. However, these children were not provided with the

opportunity to go to kindergarten, which might be the reason that this was the highest level they attained. In the last level, the code began to break. The child realized that each letter stands for a smaller sound than a syllable.

Newman (1983), in a case study of a child during the ages from 2 to 6, found the child moved from random to mock script of a book, moving from left to right in a horizontal motion. At 4 years, the child wrote the alphabet and used invented spellings. Some conventional spellings, lower case letters, and spacing were evident at 5 years of age. Invention and experimentation were the next important processes. Throughout the study, the researcher noted that this child constantly tested his own hypotheses. Adult assistance, in the form of answering the child's questions, was helpful and new inventions replaced old ideas.

Jones (1987) in a 2-year longitudinal study of children aged 3 to 6 identified five levels of understanding of written language. At the first level, drawing and writing were not seen as different. At the second level, there was a rudimentary awareness of writing as a way of conveying meaning. Children at the third level began producing graphics which looked like letters of individual letters. At the fourth level recognizable letters were used, but did not represent messages. At the fifth level children were attempting to write phonetically. Jones' (1987) study concludes children pass through these levels without

reinventing written language for themselves. Jones' (1987) findings reject Newman's (1987) conclusions about children constantly testing their own hypothesis.

Muscrope (1987) conducted a qualitative study which addressed prespelling kindergarten children's writing concepts over an 8-month period. Muscrope's (1987) study is different from previous research in her selection of subjects. The seven subjects selected were all prespellers, children who did not yet attempt to create a message with invented spelling. Regan (1987) concluded that pictures can be read, and that children rely on peers as models. Regan (1987) described three stages of development. The first stage involved children trying to understand terminology such as "read," "draw," and "write." During the second stage the child focused on the form of written language through peer models and copying. The third stage was characterized by the child's realization that print carries meaning.

Harste et al. (1981) described terms, rather than stages, which children encounter in their writing development. This writing development is not a linear process but the terms occur in harmony. The first term, text intent, is the expectation that print will make sense. Negotiability is the term used to describe the writer's knowledge of language and print to make print meaningful. Risk taking involves the writer's willingness to take

chances with spelling and grammar in order to make writing more meaningful. The last term is fine tuning language with language and denotes how what is learned from one language experience becomes a resource for further oral and written expression.

Tough (1973) described four functions of language. In the directive function a child reports on actions or sequences of actions which occur with self and others. The interpretative function was used by the child to interpret, or relate, perceptions of what has happened in his past or present experiences. The third function is the projective function when the child used his imagination to project situations which can be tied to samples of previous experiences. The relational function was different from the first three in that it involved relationships between people either to maintain needs or to interact with others in socially acceptable ways.

Calkins (1986) discussed rehearsal, drafting, and revision in a first-grade setting. Some children used drawing for rehearsing their writing. The child's picture evolved during the drawing process without concern for a finished product. The child talked about the drawing as it became visible on the page. For example, the child starts to draw a truck, announces "it's gonna go to the store," and then proceeds to draw a store. Calkins (1986) reported that older children used rehearsal as they selected a topic,

planned what to write, and anticipated audience response. Writing for the young child was present oriented. Rarely did they worry about the topic for the next day. Writing and drawing were interchanged to provide challenge and then stability. Children embodied their print in the drawing rather than the text. For instance, they might draw two trucks and write the word "CRASH" beside the picture.

Drafting involves using invented spelling, word spacing, italicized captions, and punctuation. Running commentary surrounds the writing to support the context. Commentary included talk about procedure, sounding out words for invented spelling, rereading words, and isolating words from parts to whole "B-B-B Boy, Boy."

Calkins (1986) defined simple revision as the process of adding on to a story to make it complete. Children also used revision to reread what they had written and alternate between reading and writing. Revision involved changing the story title, changing the sequence of the story, or experimenting with different ways to form a coherent message.

In summary, the earliest research studying the beginning stages of writing development was simplistic. Writing development was described as the art of scribbling, which advanced to the letter stages of handwriting. The main issue was the writing product. Handwriting levels, such as scribbling and letter formation, were identified

with the mechanical abilities of 3- to 6-year-old children as the central focus. Writing processes were ignored. As writing research has evolved, phonetic development, concepts of writing, message formation, and the functions of language have been added to descriptions of the process of writing development. Clay (1975) and DeFord (1980) emphasized the principles and rules as a more complete description of writing development than the levels described in early research (Hildreth, 1936) indicated. Calkins' (1986) research described the processes of rehearsal, drafting, and revision. Further research is needed to explore how writing development is influenced at the kindergarten level by using whole language formats, such as journal writing by children, accompanied by dialogue responses of adults. The understanding of children as writers has gone beyond the mechanical aspects towards a broader picture of what occurs during the process of writing. The assessment studies of kindergarten children's writing have explored development irrespective of curriculum innovations. Although educators know how children develop as writers in general, relatively little is known about how their development might be influenced by a specific curricular innovation.

The Role of Oral Language in the Writing Process

Learning to write can be viewed as parallel to learning to speak. As Bissex (1981) stated, if children learn to

talk by talking, they learn to write by being exposed to print. People respond to meaning in oral language first; then, after being exposed to print, they are able to learn to draw and write.

The progression of beginning writers parallels that of beginning speakers. To be more specific, Forester (1980), through observations and anecdotal records, has recorded six stages of development. The sample included first-grade children studied over a 3-year period. Oral babbling is paralleled with a scribbling stage in writing. One word sentences or "help" phrases, such as the single word "water" to communicate "give me some water," parallel the writing of one-letter spellings such as "w" for the word water. In spoken language, two- or three-word phrases or sentences such as "Me outside" correlate with two- or three-word phrases or sentences in writing development when a child might write "My cat." Simple rules of speech are compared with simple rules of writing. Overgeneralizing in both speaking and writing is the next stage. For example, the use of "ed" in "He started to run" might be overgeneralized to "He goed far away." Finally, the acquisition of conventional speech and spelling is achieved. It was apparent from Forester's study that speaking and writing are similar in the developmental process. Furthermore, children acquire both of these processes in a similar fashion. Just as they learn to speak by being immersed in an environment

that is filled with oral language, they learn to write in an environment that is full of written language.

Dyson (1983) conducted a 3-month, participant-observation study which focused on five children at a writing center. Children were asked to write, and the researcher both observed and interacted with the children. The information Dyson gathered pertained to the perception of writing and reasoning about writing behavior. Dyson made inferences about development and the relationship between talking and writing. She suggested that, at first, talk is used to give print meaning and to organize and label the world. Print is then used in the way toddler speech is used to label the world. As Forester (1980) described, one word sentences, such as "juice" to mean "Mom, I would like some juice please" are employed before two- and three-word sentences follow, such as "juice, ma" or "please ma juice." According to Dyson, talk is perceived as the essence of the written language. It provides meaning. Dyson's research goes beyond describing the parallel between writing and speaking to examining the relationship between these processes.

Dyson (1981) examined the oral processes which allow writing to take place. Dyson was a participant-observer in a self-contained public school classroom. Forty-nine kindergarten children were involved in two separate 5-month studies. Children were invited to attend a writing center.

Information collected indicated that names and numbers often had significance when used in writing. For instance, children wrote names of family members, phone numbers, and addresses of friends. This purpose was different from Dyson's 1983 study which focused on the perceptions of writing. Results, however, were similar in both studies in that print was used to organize and label the environment. The unique aspect of this study was that Dyson keyed in on three children who were writing neither lists nor random letters and numbers, but were writing for meaning. These three children's writings all point to a need for researchers to examine the process rather than merely the product in beginning writing. The child's writing begins with a thought or an idea and then a way is found to put it on paper through drawing, writing, or a combination of the two. Talk, then, helps the child provide meaning before and during the writing process.

Dyson (1986) examined the interrelationships between talking and drawing and dictating stories. Dyson was a participant-observer in a kindergarten classroom and focused on four children as case studies. The children drew pictures while having the opportunity to talk with their peers. Afterwards, they dictated their stories to an adult. Differences were noted in how the children related talking, drawing, and dictating. Two of the children used talk as an "integral" part of their drawing. A third child did not

talk much while drawing except for relating events which were outside of the drawing. In general, drawing was not used as precursor to writing. However, drawing was used by one child as a developing language story. While he was talking or drawing, the action story unfolded; both processes were intertwined. His dictated text tended to be more simplistic than his drawing-while-talking experiences. Another child used language to talk about what she had drawn for the purpose of creating characters. She used talk to enhance the visual details of her drawing. In text, dictation descriptions were given rather than stories. The third child used drawing as an art form. It was difficult for him to dictate a narrative based on his pictures. He tended to use known stories or the completed pictures as a basis for his narrative. Although this made his narrative more comprehensible, it did not necessarily mean that language and drawing were combined for the purpose of dictating.

Lamme and Childers (1983) studied the composing process of three children ages 2 to 4, in 16 sessions over 6 months. They found that if children write for real audiences and if adults refrain from criticism, group processes such as sharing and reading their writing to other children, asking for assistance, and asking and answering questions will most likely occur. This information, added to the Dyson research, points to the importance of talk while writing.

Dyson and Genishi (1982) prepared a case study of two 6-year-old children during a 1-month period. Their research was conducted during four sessions of 90 minutes. They explored the children's writing as both a written and a social process. Guiding questions included the following: "(1) What are the purposes for which each beginning writer uses oral language when composing? (2) How is the writing process of each child affected by the social context?" (Dyson & Genishi, 1982, p. 197).

Two examples of children who differed from one another with respect to these questions are related as follows: Peter, writing in a group, relied on peer interaction to encode words. He sometimes copied words or encoded them independently. When writing alone, he had a very difficult time. In an interview with Peter, it was apparent that he preferred writing with peers both for the social aspect and for academic reasons. Peter described writing alone as being very lonely. Tambrea, when writing in a group, gave advice whether it was requested or not. She did not accept advice from peers and preferred to write alone so that no one would bother her.

In response to Dyson and Genishi's first question regarding the function of language when composing, it would appear that for the two children involved in their case study encoding words and communicating messages from oral to written form was the main purpose. In response to the

question of how each child was affected by the social context in which he was writing, it is obvious that each was affected differently by the social context. For Peter, the interaction obviously helped him both socially and academically. Tambrea did not seem to be influenced by the interaction, although she may have been helped by responding to the other children. In conclusion, interaction seemed to be beneficial to the two children in different ways and it would follow that children need to be encouraged to talk as they compose.

Kasten and Clark (1987) extended a 2-year longitudinal ethnographic study which examined the function of oral language during writing. The 11 subjects were fifth and seventh grade students; however, the findings were relevant to the present study, despite the age differences. Results indicated that "the language that accompanies writing not only is highly related to the writing process, but, may in fact facilitate valuable learning opportunities" (p. 23). Kasten further stated that teachers must be aware that writing can be shared with others aloud as well as on paper. Interactions provided a means for testing new ideas and obtaining feedback about words or phrases.

To summarize, there are many functions of language in the writing process. The development of oral speaking and writing are very similar. Stages of babbling and scribbling evolve into conventional speech and writing with similar

developmental milestones. The relationship between talk and writing is also of interest. Talk provides meaning for written language. For some children, talk helps the child plan a thought or an idea to put into print, both before and during the process. It is crucial to develop the processes of talking, writing, and drawing to encourage writing. Interactive environments support children's writing development. This body of research demonstrates the importance of talk in a kindergarten writing program. Children in the study met in small groups and were encouraged to talk as they composed and to share their work. The children's oral language also provided a rich source of data on what children appeared to be learning from their journal-writing curriculum.

Drawing and Writing

The proposition that drawing precedes writing has been documented in research (Clay, 1977; Dyson, 1982; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Graves, 1980; Kane, 1982; Kellogg, 1970). Drawing often reflects the thinking of the child (Kane, 1982). The function of drawing as related to writing is addressed in this section.

Scribbles are regarded as the first step in both writing and drawing. Kellogg (1970) identified 20 basic scribbles made by children approximately 2 years old. Six categories based on direction include vertical, horizontal,

diagonal, circular, alternating, and no line movement in the scribbling process. Scribbling is regarded as a precursor to drawing and writing for young children. If children are provided with tools, scribble-drawing is often documented before 18 months of age. Following scribbling, drawing is the next graphic mode.

Graves (1980) found that for children just beginning to write at school

drawing is important to nearly all children. Their tendency is to draw first; it is their means of finding out what they know and what they may write. Beginners respond to a sheet of paper that leaves the top two-thirds for drawing and provides a few widely spaced lines at the bottom for writing. Generally, drawing decreases towards the end of the first grade and into second. (p. 10)

Although researchers might conclude that drawing is important to the young child, the function of drawing as the child learns to write is a more complex issue. Dyson (1982) in her 12-week participant-observer study asked (a) how are drawing and writing combined in the child's work, (b) what qualified as writing, and (c) what qualified as drawing? The focus was on five preconventional writers, although 22 children were interviewed concerning prerequisites and reasons for writing. Results included the following information. Children frequently combine writing and drawing, but not necessarily to form a total story. Around the child's drawings of familiar pictured objects are strings of letters and words which are not related to the

pictures. Because children could fulfill their messages with a combination of writing and drawing, the terms become confused in the process. However, when adults produce writing and drawing, they are able to differentiate between them. Results of the study imply that the writing process involves differentiating between drawing and print as children compose. Writing is not so much talk written down as it is a gradual process of making what is visible and concrete, as in drawing, into names of written objects and then into a complete story.

Ferreiro and Teberosky also addressed children's confusion in drawing and writing. In 1982, they studied 4- to 6-year-old children from varying socioeconomic groups over a 2-year period. They found that by age 4, children realized that writing can be used as a substitute for a real object. Drawing is their preferred graphic mode and they often get it confused with writing. At first they realize that pictures and print are similar in meaning, but different in form, but they do not realize that print symbolizes language. They expect writing and drawing to be similar in physical features. For instance, strings of print may be included as a part of a drawing, or big objects may be accompanied by large print. It is, therefore, a major step when one picture is paired with one word, as in the way people use signs or labels. Although the children

are able to simply separate pictures from words, producing their own pictures and words is often confusing.

The first step in composing is scribbling. From this stage children move into a drawing mode, an important process towards thinking about what they know. Drawing is often used as a rehearsal for writing. Writing and drawing are often combined and not easily differentiated by the artist-author of the work. Adult-produced drawing and writing are easily differentiated because drawing is separate from the literary thought-producing process. Further research might well address how writing and drawing are used in journals and how they affect writing development.

Invented Spelling

Invented spelling is part of the writing development process. As children become exposed to print, their awareness of conventional spelling increases. Many parents and teachers are convinced that children cannot write if they cannot spell. They either wait until a child can spell to encourage original writings or they spell words for their children. Studies of children's invented spellings are an integral part of the composition literature for they reveal the remarkable ways in which even young children can communicate. As with other research, though, these studies

have moved from analyzing products to looking at the processes children use to make inventions.

According to Read (1971), children learn to recognize an organized system of phonetic relationships based on certain aspects of sounds in words. Messer (1967) found that children as young as 4 years old were able to distinguish English from non-English word patterns. Chomsky (1971) postulated that the transition from lexical spelling to phonological relationships is not necessarily smooth. Although the focus on letters and sounds is a beginning step (Read, 1971), orthography (a system of spelling correctly) involves putting sounds together and deriving meaning as a consequence. Chomsky (1971) found that consistent structural patterns were noted by children, such as silent "e." Parts of speech, grammar, and meaning also provided clues for recognizing word forms. From these researchers (Read, Messer, and Chomsky) it might well be concluded that word patterns are often discovered by young writers.

Sorenson and Kerstetter (1979), in a case study of a 5-year-old, followed progress made in phonetic spelling. The open kindergarten-first grade school this child attended provided storytelling, oral reading, a choice of a variety of quiet reading and writing activities, child-initiated topics, and time to write. By the end of the year, the child progressed from invented spellings to long and complex sentences with limited punctuation. Clearly this child's

achievement cannot be generalized to all situations since most children do not exhibit such behavior at the end of one year. The environment would seem to have stimulated the writing development.

Beers (1980) found that children move from lower to higher levels of spelling in a sequential manner. Beers and Beers (1980) imply that the level of cognitive development is related to the development of spelling strategies.

Gentry (1982), Paul (1976), and Read (1971) all described similar spelling changes correlating with writing development over time. Gentry (1982) described one prestage, scribbling, and four strategies in developmental spelling. The deviant strategy is a stage which used symbols from the alphabet to invent words. In the prephonetic stage, simple word relationships, as in Bissex's study (RUDF for "Are you deaf?") are used. In this strategy, beginning and ending sounds without vowels form the invented spellings. The phonetic stage uses both letter-sound relationships and some vowels, but there is not a regard for conventional English orthography. In the transitional stage, vowels are included in each syllable, patterns reflect some knowledge of orthography, and some standard spelling is used. In the fifth stage, the correct strategies for spelling are employed, except for certain difficult words.

Beers and Henderson (1977) also analyzed spelling over a 6-month period in a first-grade classroom. They, too, identified sequential stages of development. Beers and Henderson (1977) found a sequence for short and long vowels. At first short vowels are replaced by the long vowels closest to the pronunciation of the short vowels. Then, the short vowels are used which are closest to the ones the child hears, but are further back in pronunciation. Finally, the correct use is made of short vowels with the exception of "u," for which "a" and "o" are substituted. In the long vowel sequence vowels are at first spelled correctly, then long vowels are replaced by short vowels which are similar in articulatory features, and finally there is a growing awareness of the diphthong characteristics of certain long vowels. In spelling with "m" and "n" in the initial, medial, and final position, they are spelled correctly, but when "m" and "n" are followed by a consonant, "m" and "n" are omitted. The main reason for this phenomenon is the articulatory features of these consonants. Vocalic "er" is represented by a single "r"; r-controlled vowels are seldom used. Often "d" is used in place of "t" and "tt" for "t." In "ed" endings such as "planted," "d" is substituted for "ed" and "id," and "ud" or "od" is substituted for "ed," followed by the use of "et" or the correct form. In a word such as "paved," the "ed" is either substituted by "d" or is used correctly. In "ing"

endings such as "towing," "ig" or "eg" is used, followed by the use of "en," "in," "eng" or the correct usage.

Gentry and Henderson (1978) found that teachers need to recognize developmental spelling changes and use them in teaching. Spelling is the ability to use the alphabet in order to communicate effectively through writing. In order to foster this spelling process, writing must be encouraged. In this way children learn to manipulate and discover words. The child must also be exposed to accepted English word patterns; however, invented spelling should be encouraged, and the adults reacting to the child should be sensitive to the developmental changes taking place.

Gentry (1987) explained that children learn to spell by using invented spelling during purposeful writing experiences. Spelling is a developmental process which is best fostered by many writing experiences. Gentry's (1987) 16-week case study of a first-grade child experiencing difficulties with spelling documents this developmental process. Before first grade, Dan's spelling was at a precommunicative stage. Alphabet symbols were used to represent words, without any sound-symbol relationships. During first grade, while Dan was at the reading center, he began using invented spelling and his spelling quickly developed. First he used a semi-phonetic spelling which uses some rudimentary knowledge of beginning sounds. He then progressed to phonetic spelling, or spelling words the

way they sound. Transitional spelling is the next level Dan attained. At the transitional level Dan relied on both his visual memory for the way the words look and his phonetic knowledge. By the beginning of second grade, Dan was using conventional spelling and was successful in formal spelling instruction at school.

Invented spelling is one segment of writing development. Researchers have observed spelling development levels which children move through in a somewhat sequential manner. This development seems to be expediated through a variety of whole language reading and writing activities rather than through continuous drill. At the kindergarten level it is not wise for an adult to spell for children. In the study to be presented in this paper, writers were encouraged to use invented spellings. The focus was on shifting the children's attention from an emphasis on correct spelling to communicating messages.

Home Environments and Their Role in Literary Development

Kindergarten children enter their first year of formal school with varying degrees of knowledge about print. The experiences these children have encountered at home have a great effect on their literacy development. This section will review the studies on the impact of home environment on literacy development.

In Durkin's (1966) study of 200 early readers, she identified common characteristics of these children's literary development. Parent interviews, as well as standardized tests, were used. Children were followed through sixth grade. Early readers continued to perform above average in reading throughout their school years. There were three overall characteristics shared by these early readers: (a) initially in their literary development, children explored through drawing and writing; (b) children asked their parents several questions relating to sound-symbol relationships and spelling; and (c) families responded to questions about reading and writing and assisted their children in these tasks.

Ten years later Clark (1976) and Hall, Moretz, and Statom (1976) described the home environments of early writers. The difference between these studies and Durkin's is that the sample size of the latter studies is smaller and the research data are more descriptive.

Clark (1976) conducted research on early reading through parent interviews as well as standardized testing which also provided information about early writing. Children initiated early interest in reading in 25 out of 30 cases before 4 years of age. Ten of these children were also interested in early writing, including activities such as copying words, letters, names, and messages.

Hall et al. (1976) investigated the home backgrounds of early writers. Their sample included children who learned to write before formal instruction. Criteria for being defined as an early writer included the following: It should be clear that the child is attempting to communicate ideas through writing and that the child is both interested in writing and is self-motivated.

The children all attended nursery school at a university nursery-kindergarten. Twenty-two out of 79 children were identified as early writers. Information was obtained through parent interviews which lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Interviews consisted of questions about the family's writing behavior, writing activities, responses to the child's writing, reading activities, and the child's personality. Findings indicated that most parents were educated for professional jobs. Children frequently saw their parents engaging in reading and writing activities. Writing tools were easily accessible to the children, reading materials were readily available, and children were read to frequently. Parents offered assistance in writing tasks at their child's request.

Writing preceded reading in all but one case, and only four teachers indicated that the early writers were also early readers. It was suggested that parents be asked to write as well as read to their children. These researchers

concluded that "early exposure to and experience with writing as communication may facilitate interest in both reading and writing and may contribute to initial success in school" (Hall et al., 1976, p. 585).

In 1980, Bissex took a step away from the 1960s and 1970s and, instead of using 20 or more children, focused on the literary development of one child, her son, Paul. Paul's home environment was filled with print and his mother was an available audience for her son. Indeed, Bissex met all the criteria for providing a conducive environment for literary development, as presented in earlier findings. Because of the focus on just one child, the information obtained is extremely detailed when compared to earlier research. For instance, as he became increasingly able at writing, Bissex informed her son of the conventional rules about spacing and punctuation. When Paul was writing phonetically, all the words ran together. Bissex informed him that when most people write, they leave spaces. Separation of words soon followed, with a need for punctuation and a concern for correctness. This research provides precise information about how literary development occurs.

Schickendanz and Sullivan (1984) and Taylor (1983) also used small samples of children in their research on parents and their children's literary development. Schickendanz and Sullivan (1984) studied six parents and their children 3.5

to 5 years of age. They were interested in ascertaining information about their children's literary development. These children attended a university nursery school. Their parents all had a high interest in reading and writing activities. Approximately one-fourth of all home reading experiences involved story reading. The other literary activities were child-initiated events. Children became more involved in writing when parents were writing. They rarely engaged in writing activities alone. Although these were children of professionals, results of other research all seem to produce similar findings with respect to generally optimal home environments for early writers.

Taylor (1983) conducted an ethnographic study of six families whose 20 children ranged in age from 2 to 17. This study was conducted at various intervals over a 2-year period. Data were collected through observations. Parents paired events in their own childhood with similar literary events for their children. Experiences which parents regarded as nonproductive were changed for their own children. This study was unique in its inclusion of siblings in the sample. Each child in the family was found to develop a different interest in print. Most of the children tended to use print to organize their environment through such experiences as forming clubs, making signs, and selling small food items. Taylor (1983) postulated that, in order to be ready for the reading and writing taught in

schools, children need to explore different forms of print at the preschool level.

Ruddy (1988) investigated the role of home and school literary environments on writing processes as perceived by parent and teachers. The study included 81 children from two suburban schools. One group was involved in process writing at school, while the other group was not. Results indicated that siblings played a major role in literary development. The child without siblings needed more literary experiences at home. Children who had additional adults living in the home scored lower in most areas of writing.

Rich (1985) determined that, although it has become clear through earlier research what type of environment is needed to stimulate literary development, many children do not have access to materials. Therefore, she developed a "writing suitcase" for two preschool children who did not seem interested in reading and writing. In the suitcase were included such items as books, paper, various writing tools, glue, scissors, tape, staples, and various other tools useful for engaging in literary experiences. Conferences were held with the parents and suggestions were made as to the use of the materials. A marked difference was reported in the students' motivation for reading and writing, and often activities produced at home were shared at school. Along with a new interest in writing, there was

an increased attention span in writing. Whether this was due to the access to writing tools or an active interest on the part of the parents in the child's literary experiences was not clearly indicated in the results of the study.

It has been noted that Durkin's (1966) research used quantitative data and large samples. Researchers in the 1970s moved towards the smaller, more detailed descriptive studies found in the 1980s (Bissex, 1980; Hall, 1976; Rich, 1985; Taylor, 1983). In narrowing the numbers of children involved in the study, the heterogeneous, large sample which Durkin used evolved into smaller studies, many of which tended to use professional families. Given the limitation that the home environment seems to be similar in all of the studies, the optimal literary environment might be defined as an environment which is filled with print and includes a family that encourages and supports literary activities, with adults available to help with writing tasks upon the request of the child.

Journal Writing in Kindergarten

Journal writing has recently become a source of investigation. Fulweiler's The Journal Book (1987) is devoted exclusively to this topic. Articles in this book present accounts of journal writing in classrooms ranging from elementary to higher education level. There are not, however, any articles focusing on kindergarten journal

writing. There have been few studies specifically concerning journal writing in kindergarten. During the last few years, Buxton (1982), Dyson (1986, 1988), Hall and Duffy (1987), Hipple (1985), Kintishon (1986), and Manning et al. (1987) have contributed to this area. Statom (1987) and Bode (1988) are included in this section because of their description of dialogue writing at the elementary level.

Buxton (1982) assessed the journal writing of 30 children 5 to 8 years old, enrolled in an art-centered alternative school. The journals were used as an essential component of the reading program. Each child was expected to write and draw in his journal on a daily basis. Teachers of the younger kindergarten to mid-second grade children transcribed for them. Children either traced the letters or wrote underneath the dictation. Buxton found that journal writing was a significant factor in writing development because of the continuous practice at each child's developmental level. In the teacher's assessment of each child's daily journal writing, there were three areas used as focal points. The first area includes assessing what the author means and how it is worded and organized. The second dimension involves how the child approaches the subject. The final area is form, which includes the interrelationships between drawing and writing, semantics, and the mechanics involved in writing. The teacher uses these dimensions to respond to the individual writer, rather

than taking a critical stance. Teachers report that this three-dimensional assessment adequately reflects the child's developmental level in writing and drawing.

Hipple (1985) described journal writing in her kindergarten classroom of 23 children. A sizable amount of time was spent in writing each day; 30 minutes of this time was devoted to journal writing. All graphics were termed writing so that the children would think of themselves as writers. Some dictation was taken daily by an adult regardless of the child's ability to produce conventional writing. Two children per day were encouraged to share their writing with the rest of the class. Hipple summarized the purpose of her study by listing the following questions:

1. What would the content of the journals be?
2. What functions would the journal serve?
3. What writing stages would be exhibited in printed texts?
4. What trends would appear in journal writing?
5. What would my role as a teacher come to be?
6. Most important of all, would journal writing be a worthwhile activity? (1985, p. 257)

The content was completely different among the children's journals. Three content categories were found. In the first one, real events in their lives were depicted. The second category involved fantasy tales, and the third category involved stories which were descriptions of

isolated concepts about pictures drawn, such as "This is my house."

Journal writing served two functions. First, it was a way for children to record their ideas for personal pleasure or to share. Second, it provided a vehicle for communicating feelings about an event in their lives.

*Hipple suggested that journal writing may permit an emotional release for some children.^y Most of the children's writing stages followed a predictable route from nonwriting to invented spelling, although some children's writing did not follow a linear path. Children who dictated elaborate narratives did not appear interested in writing. The writers enjoyed sharing their journals with their classmates. Hipple found that her role was to be patient and flexible with these beginning writers and concluded that writing was an enjoyable and worthwhile activity for kindergarten children.

In Dyson's (1986) participant-observer study of kindergarten children, journals were the main part of the literary curriculum. The children used their journals primarily for dictating a story to their teacher. In this study Dyson examined the interrelationship among drawing, talking, and writing as described earlier in this review. Therefore, journal writing was seen as the process of organizing children's dictation rather than as the focal point of the study.

Dyson (1988) conducted a participant-observation study with urban public school kindergarten children. Children drew a picture in a journal several times a week, dictated a story to the teacher, and then copied part of the story. The purpose of the study was to observe what the children did and the intentions guiding their efforts. Dyson found that, as a group, the children first depicted scenes by drawing and by dictating simple descriptive statements. Later in the year, the scenes became more elaborate and involved additional objects or figures. Dictated texts became more detailed. By the end of the year children felt there was a need to form a coherent message and attempted to read the texts after dictation. Individual children varied from this group; one child used drawing as dramatic play. The drawing was filled with action, at the expense of detail in objects and characters. Texts were used as a summary for the action rather than as a complete story. Implications for teachers were to be aware of the child's purpose when analyzing texts, be certain to evaluate based on the intention of the writer, be sensitive to purposes when responding to efforts, and provide a variety of experiences to encourage a variety of texts.

Kintishon (1986) followed the daily journal writing experiences of a group of students from prekindergarten to first grade for 30 minutes a day. The children wrote their own stories, but often creativity seemed to falter as

independence was gained. Several conclusions were noted: drawing and talking were used to communicate, children learned to read by hearing and watching stories read and reread, and writing can either be a solitary or social activity for eager young authors.

Manning et al. (1987) analyzed the content of writings of 20 first graders who wrote daily in a journal for one year. Ten categories were found: pictures, scribbles, labels, lists, copies of texts, retelling of texts, personal contents, imaginative content, informational content, and other forms such as puzzles. Children varied in using the categories and wrote on a wide variety of topics. Results of the study also indicated that as children became more adept at writing, they started writing first and then drawing.

Hall and Duffy (1987) worked with kindergarten children on dialogue journal writing in Duffy's classroom. Duffy's main goal was to create a meaningful dialogue with the child. The intention of the dialogue was to create an interested audience for the child. Duffy reported that children's dialogue journal writing became more distinctive and more spontaneous, and it helped to develop a special teacher-child relationship.

Statom (1987) discussed dialogue journals used with elementary school children. Dialogue journals are both interactive and functional with a mutual interest binding

the writers together for the purpose of communication. In the elementary school classroom, this simple, teacher-developed practice also involves meaningful, functional reading and writing as a single whole, just as speaking and listening are a seamless whole in oral discourse" (p. 49). The teacher must be dedicated to the idea of a dialogue journal because the responses must create further motivation for the student to continue writing in the journal.

Bode (1988) explored the effect of dialogue journal writing with parents or teachers in a first-grade setting. Quantitative results indicated that children who wrote with parents and teachers scored significantly higher on holistic writing and reading comprehension. Intercorrelations of the language arts, specifically listening comprehension and holistic writing, were most interrelated with other variables. Case studies made on four subjects showed growth in the use of syntax, spelling, complete sentences, capitalization, and punctuation.

Buxton (1982) used journals as part of a reading program. Kindergarten children, however, dictated their writing and did not generate any writing of their own. Dyson (1988) also used dictation as the text of journal writing. Hipple (1985) focused on journal writing in her study and provides the most complete description of kindergarten journal writing thus far in the literature.

Dyson (1987) also described journal writing in her kindergarten classroom. Dyson (1986) and Kintishon (1986) both used journal writing as one part of their study.

In summary, research has been conducted on journal writing at the kindergarten level. Dictation by the child to an adult has been the primary means of storytelling. What the reported research has not included is observation of verbal interactions during the writing process. Research also is scant with respect to the role of dialogue in the kindergarten journal.

Researchers have documented general writing development. How writing development is influenced by using one particular curricular innovation, such as journal writing, needs further exploration. Writing with pictures and dictating to an adult have been the focal points of most of the studies on journal writing. Research studies have not focused exclusively on the learning which occurs when journals are a daily part of the kindergarten curriculum. Children learn in more self-directed ways when they write and pretend to write independently. The kindergarten child's process of writing, rather than the product, also needs clarification. Research indicates that talk provides meaning before and during the writing process. Interactions are conclusive to beginning writing, but how these interactions benefit different children needs to be supported.

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In the first part of this chapter a justification for a descriptive case study which uses the tools of ethnography for investigating dialogue journal writing in kindergarten is provided. The tools of ethnography presented include asking ethnographic questions, participant observation, field notes, interviews, and analysis of data at the domain and taxonomic level. The next section contains a description of the setting, which involves the selection and the description of the research site. In the third section an overview of the questions to be asked during the descriptive process, the role of a participant-observer, and interviewing techniques are provided. In the last section record keeping and data analysis are described.

The history of writing research has changed with respect to methods used to gather information. In the early studies of literacy (Durkin, 1966; Hildreth, 1936) researchers used some interviews, but also relied on statistical analysis. Standardized test scores and IQ scores of participants in the studies were used in the

analysis of data. Research involved relatively large numbers of students and provided generalized results about the surface features of writing such as scribbling levels and handwriting.

More recent studies (Bissex, 1980; Clay, 1975; Dyson, 1981, 1983, 1986; Harste & Woodward, 1983) have focused on the importance of observing children in their natural environment. These observations have documented the process involved in writing. The naturalistic approach reveals what is important, dynamic, and pervasive in the field (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

Holdaway stated that "our first responsibility is to observe with proper humility and open-mindedness how children making healthy development in literacy actually operate, and to what extent basic insights about learning apply to the acquisition of language and of literacy" (1979, p. 17). Through these observations, descriptions of the world of kindergarten children working on writing become more clear. In the present study the research operated under Holdaway's supposition that literacy learning begins with the immersion of the child into a print-filled environment. The environment in the present study is the dialogue journal writing center. Clearly, this environment is best defined by using descriptive techniques.

Guba and Lincoln, in a discussion of the choice between statistical research and naturalistic research, pointed out

that the choice of evaluation techniques should be made on the basis of "the best fit between assumptions and postures of a paradigm and the phenomenon being studied or evaluated" (1981, p. 56). Emergent literacy is a broad term used to describe the complex and intertwined language arts areas. In this study journal writing as a whole language activity was the phenomenon under investigation. As Newman (1985) pointed out, whole language allows a perspective from which to observe students. The philosophy of a whole language approach such as journal writing inherently involves oral interaction and ultimately writing for the purpose of communicating.

Teale and Sulzby stated that "researchers operating from what we are describing as an emergent literacy perspective generally are endeavoring to keep their investigations naturalistic, and from a language perspective, holistic so that ecological validity will be maintained" (1986, p. xxi). In this whole language approach, Dyson (1986) and Graves (1982) confirmed the interplay between talking, drawing, and writing. They are intertwined during the literary process. Drawing leads to writing or talking; talking could lead to drawing or writing. Any combination and sequence of the three areas is possible. Graves further stated that, from watching children write, it is evident that there is a continuous transaction between the writing and thought processes.

Learning to write involves refining the processes of learning how language works. Watching children implies that the transaction must be described using a naturalistic approach.

For young children, journal writing involves many interactions. A descriptive technique is needed to capture the entire sequence of writing. Journal writing as a curricular choice was discussed in Newman's (1985) book; she reflected that only by observing and watching children using language will researchers better understand language. From this understanding researchers will be better equipped to make decisions about appropriate curricular methods which can be used to match students. Unia (1985), in her description of journal writing with her second- and fifth-grade children, concluded that journals are important kidwatching tools. Through observation, both academic and personal understanding of the child evolves, curricular changes and personal teaching style can be evaluated, and the teacher-student duo becomes a partnership for learning.

Overview

The research was conducted using descriptive case study methods. Merriam (1988) defines four characteristics of case studies: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive. Particularistic means that the study describes a particular situation, in the present study journal writing

in kindergarten. Descriptive means that details of the phenomenon are recorded. Heuristic means that the reader is able to understand the phenomenon better after reading the study. Inductive reasoning is the process used while examining the data collected.

A descriptive case study is a qualitative approach. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) described qualitative research in the following ways. The natural setting is a direct source of data and the key ingredient is the researcher. Qualitative research is descriptive by design, and data are often in the form of pictures, quotations, transcripts, field notes, photos, videotapes, personal documents, and memos. Data are analyzed by narration rather than by numbers. The process is done inductively, not to prove a hypothesis, but to use data to provide direction. As Denzin (1978) pointed out, the hypothesis is based on a theory and continually changes as the study progresses. Ross and Kyle (1982) reported that qualitative inquiry describes "in detail educational environments, behaviors, concepts and variables, to explain their meanings and to explore the relationships within and among them" (1982, p. 2). In the current study, the researcher acted as a participant-observer in the setting. According to Zelditch (1969), in participant-observer situation, the researcher may take part in events and may also interview participants. In the setting discussed, the researcher was familiar to the

students and they were, therefore, not affected to a great extent by her presence.

The researcher spent over 140 hours at the site collecting field notes. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) defined the characteristics of field notes. Their notes are descriptive enough to provide pictures of the setting and subjects and also include observations and conversations. Dialogue is reconstructed and, in addition, includes quotes, descriptions, gestures, accents, and facial expressions. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) also described activities which included sequences of behaviors and acts and records of the observer's behaviors. The reflective part of the field notes included the observer's personal account, feelings, ideas, and impressions as well as any problems which arose.

Setting

Selection of the Research Site

This study focused on one kindergarten classroom in Duval County Schools. The researcher is the primary resource teacher at the school and has been employed there for 13 years. Rapport has been established between the researcher, students, school staff, and parents through teaching at the school during this time and being involved in the education of many of the same families over the years. The selection of this kindergarten classroom was based on the following criteria: (a) formal reading

readiness and writing instruction were being introduced, (b) the teacher was open to new curriculum experiences, (c) the kindergarten teacher and the researcher had worked with writing activities for 2 years prior to the study, and (d) the kindergarten teacher was comfortable with an observer in the room.

Gaining Entry to the Site

The researcher's role at the school provided access to the site. A meeting was conducted with the teacher to explain the proposed study, and her response was enthusiastic. The researcher also met with the school principal. A proposal was submitted to the Director of Curriculum Audit. A committee from the district level staff reviewed the proposed study based on three points: (a) whether the research would be beneficial to the students, (b) whether it would interfere with the learning process, and (c) whether it would take too much time out of the normal class- room routine. The committee agreed, without reservation, to accept the research done by the primary resource teacher at the researcher's home school. The researcher spoke to the Director and to one of the committee members and agreed to share the final study with district level staff as a viable new component for the kindergarten program.

Description of the Site

The elementary school in which the study was conducted houses 820 students. The population attending this school was primarily low socioeconomic, evidenced by 67% of the children receiving free lunch or reduced-cost lunch. Kindergarten children came from the areas surrounding the school. The neighborhood was made up of mobile homes, federally subsidized housing, two city Housing and Urban Development (HUD) apartment complexes, and lower- to middle-class housing developments. The racial make-up of the student body was 55% Caucasian, 37% black, and 8% other minorities. The school was composed of six kindergarten classes, six first grades, five second grades, five third grades, four fourth grades, and four fifth grades. In addition to the 30 classroom teachers and the principal, the faculty included the following full-time personnel: one assistant principal, four varying exceptionality teachers, a music teacher, a librarian, a speech clinician, and a guidance counselor. An art teacher and a physical education teacher were at the school twice a week.

The kindergarten is a self-contained classroom. It was a large, air-conditioned room with carpeting and a low ceiling designed to minimize noise. The room was furnished with home living equipment, low book shelves, tables, chairs, and a water-sand table. A variety of manipulatives were available, such as large and small blocks, dolls, doll

houses, puppets, rubber animals, puzzles, pegboards, games, and a wagon. Many other materials which provide practice in learning numbers, letters, colors, and shapes were also available. Various records, tapes, books, filmstrips, listening stations, and pictures were used to expose children to print. Consumable materials such as crayons, markers, pencils, scissors, paints, glue, clay, and various types of paper were also provided.

Children attended school from 8:45 a.m. until 1:45 p.m. daily. The morning schedule was comprised of sharing time, language arts and math activities at learning centers, and small group time with the teacher. An aide circulated among the centers to give help and check for completion of center activities as needed. Completion of a minimum on one center activity in language arts, one in math, and small group time with the teacher was encouraged. Most of the children finished the activities in two or more language arts and math centers daily. In the afternoon gross motor activities, story time, music, art, social studies, and science were presented through center activities and large group experiences.

All children were instructed in reading readiness through Ginn 720 Level 1 and were placed in a module based on their readiness skills. Module I included a selection of stories and poems which were used with the entire class during the year. Module II presented colors, shapes,

positional concepts, and various visual and auditory discrimination activities. Module III involved learning letters and beginning sounds. This program was supplemented by Alpha Time, which reinforced letters, sounds, and various readiness concepts. County policy required children to master approximately 85% of prescribed reading and math skills during the year. The teacher read to the children each day. Language experience stories supplemented the classroom activities. A wide variety of language art activities and skill reinforcement were available in the learning centers. Writing was child-initiated and, although it was encouraged, it was not a required activity.

Mrs. B,¹ the teacher in this setting, was a 42-year-old woman who entered college after her own children started school. She has taught kindergarten at this school for the past 8 years. She was working towards a master's degree in guidance. She does not plan on moving out of the early childhood area once she receives her degree in guidance but, rather, views the guidance degree as a new way of expanding her knowledge about children. Mrs. B is an active member of the Florida Association for Children Under Six. She is an extremely personable, easygoing teacher who

¹The teacher's name and the students' names are all pseudonyms.

has established positive rapport with students, parents, faculty, and staff. She is open to new ideas and provides a variety of exciting activities for her students. She has an optimistic outlook for all the students and strives to make each child successful.

In an interview, Mrs. B and the researcher discussed her philosophy of teaching. Her beliefs can be summarized as follows: All children are capable of learning, but each child develops at a different rate. Different modes of teaching, such as a whole language approach, phonics, and basic skills in language arts are appropriate for different children. By providing a variety of learning experiences using different approaches, more children will benefit from their kindergarten year. A major portion of the day should be devoted to art, music, and language arts. Mrs. B also believes that the emotional and social adjustment of children should be a major goal of the kindergarten program and should not be sacrificed for academic gains. The social, emotional, physical, and academic needs of children must all be considered when teaching kindergarten children. In regard to teaching writing, Mrs. B believes that writing should be child-initiated and spontaneous and that it should be encouraged, but she was unsure as to how to develop this into a regular part of the curriculum.

The children who were selected were representative of the class which stayed the entire year. At the time of

selection, 24 children were enrolled. Two children from each of three achievement groups were selected. The researcher selected children who had attended school since the first 2 weeks and who did not anticipate moving. This cut the group size down considerably since the school population is fairly mobile. The researcher then attempted to choose students who would be representative of the class with respect to race and socioeconomic status. Keeping in mind the guiding question pertaining to interaction, the final task was to select a balanced representation of children who interact or refrain from interacting with peers and adults. The final group consisted of two children from each of three academically homogeneous groups: three black children, one hispanic child, and two white children. Three males and three females, to equally balance gender, were included. There were four children eligible for free lunch or lunch at reduced cost and two who paid full price. Two of the children were very talkative, one was very quiet, and the other three interacted within the range of interaction engaged in by most kindergarten children.

The researcher observed over 140 hours during a 9-week period in the spring of 1988. The researcher observed every day for 9 weeks for a total of 44 daily observations made, with the exception of one Friday on which a field trip had been scheduled. There was a total of 195 journal entries produced by the five focal children in the study. The sixth

child moved at the end of 4 weeks (see Table 1). The researcher felt comfortable with the 9-week time used to study journal writing in kindergarten.

Ethnographic Questions

Ethnographic questions are used as a tool to gather data to describe the journal writing process. Questioning is an integral part of the descriptive process. General questions are important for collecting and organizing data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). The researcher uses the process which includes the continuous use of questions and answers which are used in the cyclical process of interviewing. The data thus gathered are then analyzed to provide direction for processing the next sequence of data. Responses to questions asked in this study provide data about the setting, the journals, and the children involved in the process. In the present study one main question was used to initially describe journal writing:

How do children respond to journal writing as a whole language writing method when used in a kindergarten writing center?

During the process of gathering and analyzing information, three questions were used as a focus for the description.

1. What types of interactions occur among the kindergarten children and among the children and the adults at the writing center while working in the journals?

2. How do these interactions influence children's writing behaviors?

3. What kinds of written interactions occur among the kindergarten children and their teacher and among the kindergarten children and the participant observer during journal writing?

Spradley (1979) suggested three types of questions to be asked in this type of qualitative study: descriptive, structural, and contrast questions. Each of these questions is used to seek different types of information during data collection and is used for different methods of analysis.

1. Descriptive questions provide initial information about the site: the population, neighborhood make-up, racial and economic factors, classrooms, and faculty. The classroom is also described, as well as the daily schedule and components of the curriculum. The description of the teacher and a brief philosophy of teaching are also provided for an initial introduction into the classroom. Descriptive questions asked included "What is the neighborhood like?" "What is the typical schedule of the day?" "How are the centers managed?" and "Who is in the classroom?"

2. Structural questions are asked to provide further explanation of the classroom and the writing process. These

questions are useful following initial observations in discovering how the environment is organized. Questions beyond descriptive data by asking for explanations of behavior, classroom activities, and physical arrangements in the room. Structural questions included "Who do the students interact with while writing?" "How are interactions used while writing?" and "How do the students respond to the dialogue?" Answers from these questions help to refocus and narrow the observations in order to answer questions posed by the data collected.

3. Contrast questions are used to develop relationships among domains which are encountered in the data. Domains are developed from collecting further information on focal areas organized from structural questions. The contrast "principle states that the meaning of a symbol can be discovered by finding out how it is different from other symbols" (Spradley, 1979, p. 157). Differences can be noted through field notes, interviews, and asking contrast questions. These are asked with descriptive and structural questions. They often require an explanation and are repeated in order to find all possible differences. Contrast questions included "How do children's interactions with peers differ from their interactions with adults?" "How do responses to the dialogue differ between children?" and "In what ways do students differ in interacting with themselves?"

Each of these three types of questions narrows the focus of the observation and also provides an opportunity to generate new questions.

Gathering Descriptive Data

Lofland (1971) described inquiry as the investigation of a social phenomenon. In the present study, the social phenomenon under investigation was journal writing in a kindergarten classroom. As Bogdan and Biklen (1982) point out, most researchers use a variety of data sources to investigate social phenomena. Merriam (1988) suggests that "this approach aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon" (p. 10). It is rare that one type of data would be used. In the present study descriptive measures used include both participant observation and interviews.

Participant Observation

In this study the researcher acted as a participant-observer. The students in the setting were familiar with the researcher and were not greatly affected by her presence. McCall and Simmons (1969) described this type of researcher as one who both observes and participates. The researcher may take part in events and may interview participants. As Bogdan and Biklen (1982) suggested, in this role the researcher will observe on site, recording

field notes including descriptions, conversations, and dialogues. Denzin (1978b) listed the following assumptions for participant observation as a research method. First, the researcher must share the activity of the subjects as closely as possible. Next, he must participate in the world of the subjects. Third, the researcher must form a role in his interaction with the subjects. Ross (1988) noted that the researcher should record every observable event which would contribute to explaining the phenomenon being studied--in this instance, journal writing in kindergarten. Exact words, actions, and products are written down in order to determine the focus. Ross (1988) listed the following suggestions for observers: (a) avoid changing the setting; (b) record every observable event which might help explain the phenomenon; (c) record the exact words, actions, and products; (d) use observations to determine the focus; (e) be aware of other perceptions and criticisms; and (f) pay attention to the subtle particulars of the classroom.

The researcher was a known observer in the setting. Being a known observer implies "preexisting relationships of trust" (Lofland, 1971, p. 95). Lofland suggested this is fairly common in the case of studies involving children. A key advantage to this arrangement is that the observer is free to move about in the setting and is expected to be curious about what takes place (Lofland, 1971). The degree of participation is a question which is answered as the

research develops (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). In the present study the observer acted as a facilitator who was more likely to help the children than to give facts. For instance, when asked how to spell a word, the teacher or observer responded, "How do you think it should be spelled?" or "Why don't you give it your best try?" Mrs. B and the researcher have worked together for 8 years. The routine of the classroom was well known to the researcher; therefore, the writing center fitted into the morning centers without undue disruption in the setting. The researcher was able to record copious notes while writing with the children in order to record events with exact words, actions, and products. The children were told that the researcher was there to write with them. One day the question was raised by a child to the researcher, "What are you writing in your book?" Another child quickly responded, "She's writing what we wrote so that she remembers how to read it." That answer satisfied the group. Writing by the researcher was done in cursive so that children could not read names and words they might know. When asked why the researcher wrote "That way," she responded, "because I can go faster." Writing recorded in the child's book was manuscript. Videotaping was used several times to check on accuracy of field notes, including facial expressions and gestures. As with all research methods, participant observation can lead to problems in the study. Denzin stated:

Six specific problems characterize the participant observation method:

1. The observer must gain entry into the group to be studied, and this entry must permit repeated returns.
2. The observer must establish and maintain a social identity that will permit ongoing social relationships and continuing observations.
3. The observer must attempt not to alter the behavior of those observed, but must attempt to fit into the natural flow and rhythm of the social structure.
4. The observer must remain objective in the face of new experiences and must not be taken in by those being studied.
5. The observer must develop a reliable and dependable method for recording field notes.
6. He or she must be prepared to leave the field situation at the proper time and must have a theoretical grasp of the data so that the exit time is easily discernible--e.g., no new observations are forthcoming. (1978, p. 256)

In the present study entry into the group had been established since the beginning of the school year. The researcher's role in the school was multi-faceted: tester, observer, teacher, interviewer, parent person, etc. The researcher's presence in the daily classroom was not new to the children; therefore, ongoing observations were conducted without incident. As in any study, altering the behavior of the group is perhaps the greatest challenge. By maintaining a passive attitude at the start of the study, the effect appeared to be minimized. Requests for help with writing were passed back to them or their peers. Requests for assistance for any other reason was referred to the teacher or assistant.

Interviewing

Interviewing children was used to validate information and to clarify events as they occurred. Spradley (1979) suggested that children make good informants and usually have ample free time for interviews. Spradley (1979) stated that the role of the interviewer is to ask questions, listen, and express interest in the interviewee in both verbal and nonverbal ways. "It is best to think of ethnographic interviews as a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants" (p. 58). In the interview Spradley (1979) suggested first greeting the interviewee and then explaining the objective. The researcher must offer explanations about the project and explain how information is being recorded (taped or written). The schedule of interview events and also an explanation of different questions was also addressed. Throughout the interview the use of ethnographic questions which are of a descriptive, structural, and contrast nature were used. Taking turns and expressing interest was also an integral part of the communication in the interviews. Often it was necessary to restate the informant's terms or responses in order to obtain a clear description of the event(s). The interviews ended with friendly questions and a friendly goodbye.

Denzin (1978b) described three types of interviews. In the scheduled standardized interview, the interviewer uses a predetermined time and specific list of items to be asked. In the nonscheduled standardized interview the interviewer seeks certain information from all subjects, but the phrasing and the ordering of questions is individualized to each respondent. The nonstandardized interview is basically unstructured. There are no specific questions asked and there is no set schedule.

In the present study the nonscheduled standardized interview was used to validate the information gathered during the first 40 days of the study. Interview questions used were based on Goodman's (1981) questionnaire on print awareness. The interview was based on clarifying and validating information gathered. The nonscheduled standardized interview was used because each child understood and interacted differently with the researcher. Answers were accepted without conditions, with such phrases as "Oh, I see." Questions were modified and restated when a student answered differently from previous information supported. A limited amount of nonscheduled interviewing was conducted when a question of great importance occurred, especially during the final 2 weeks of the study. For example, one of the target children developed from using strings of letters which did not usually match her drawing to a phonetic stage which matched her picture, in 2 days.

The researcher asked her why her writing had changed so much, to account for the dramatic development which had taken place.

A nonscheduled interview was also conducted with the teacher prior to the study to gain information about her philosophy of working with children and the curriculum.

Interviewing young children can be a difficult challenge. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) suggested children tend to seek approval or withdraw from the authority figure. Adult interviewers tend to lead conversations. Such information should be considered when analyzing data. In the present study, the scheduled nonstandardized interview was videotaped and reviewed by the researcher and the teacher in order to account for discrepancies between what had been recorded in the history of the study, the first 40 days, and what the students answered during the interview.

Record Keeping

Record keeping was accomplished through written field notes and tapes. Bogdan and Biklin (1982) suggested these data include both descriptive and reflective notes. Their guidelines include that descriptive data provide a portrait of the subjects, their physical appearance, dress, mannerisms, and style of talking and acting. After the first description, only changes were noted. Dialogue was also included containing quotes, unique words and phrases,

gestures, accents, and facial expressions. The description evoked an image of the physical setting in the kindergarten classroom. Descriptive data also included a full account of events, who was involved, the manner in which they were involved, and the nature of the action. The observer's behavior was also included.

The reflective part of the notes contained reflections on the analysis, including what the researcher learned, emerging themes, patterns, and connections among data. Reflections about methods used included the selection of students, effect of observer on data, rapport with subjects, patterns encountered, ideas on solving problems, and assessment of what had been accomplished and what was yet to be done. Ethical dilemmas, conflicts, and points of clarification were noted. These reflective data were recorded by the researcher.

Analyzing Data

In the analysis of the data, the researcher made decisions which narrowed the study, developed analytic questions, and developed a system for making the voluminous amounts of data surmountable (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

It was also necessary to examine the parts, the relationship of the parts, and their relationship to the whole. In order to do this, two of Spradley's methods of

analysis were used as tools for describing the journal writing.

Spradley's (1979) two methods of analysis which were used are domain analysis and taxonomic analysis. In the domain analysis, a search is made for categories which reflect an understanding of what is happening. Structural questions are used to test domains. Questions will provide information about kinds of things, places, parts which are included, events which are a result of other events, reasons for events, functions of such events, the intended results, sequences which are involved, and characteristics which are noted. Each of these questions must be reviewed repeatedly to find new domains. Structural questions can be formulated to discover more information about a domain. This cycle is repeated throughout the study to find major domains.

In the taxonomic analysis, the researcher selected several domains in which to focus in depth, beginning with the domain containing the most information. By asking structural questions, the domain was broken down into subheadings. The researcher then formed an outline, formed structural questions to verify relationships, and found new terms. Additional observations were conducted, and the completed taxonomy was constructed.

Researcher's Qualifications and Biases

In a descriptive study the researcher is the primary tool for collecting data. It is important to recognize the qualifications and biases of the researcher in order to provide a framework for the study. The researcher of this study has been a kindergarten teacher in the county for 7 years and a primary resource specialist for the past 6 years. As a primary resource teacher she has spent a portion of each day in observing children; taking notes; talking with parents, teachers, and children; and providing for students' needs. She also has conducted a workshop on writing development based on experiences from the classroom. The researcher holds an M.Ed. in elementary education with an emphasis on early childhood and has completed course work for an Ed.D. in curriculum and instruction with a specialization in early childhood. She has also read extensively in the area of qualitative research.

Certain biases may have an impact on the study. It is important to recognize these biases to inform the reader that the researcher is aware that they exist and to help the reader understand what is said. The researcher believes that:

1. Various teaching methods such as a mixed philosophical approach, a basic skills approach, and a whole language approach might influence children in different ways.

2. Journal writing is only one whole language approach to writing development, and writing might be influenced by many other experiences in the classroom.

3. Whole language is a more viable approach to fostering literary development than a basic skills approach.

4. The children's internal representations which lead to writing will often be misinterpreted by another person.

Validity

The issue of validity is always necessary to address in research. Denzin (1978a) described problems of external and internal validity. Observations should be generalizable to other populations. By focusing on six children who are representative of one classroom for a long period of time, over 140 hours, chance circumstances that might arise should have been offset.

Methods of internal validity include "(1) historical factors, (2) subject maturation, (3) subject bias, (4) subject mortality, (5) reactive effects of the observer, (6) changes in the observer, and (7) peculiar aspects of the situation" (Denzin, 1978, p. 197).

In an effort to limit historical factors, all of the selected children had attended only this kindergarten class the entire year. Subject maturation was recorded through field notes, videotape recordings, and the actual journals.

Interviews, field notes, and information from the teacher and the students helped in recording any subject bias. Mortality rate for the study was one child. Although any observer has a reactive effect on the subjects in a study, there was no discernible difference in the children's writing when the teacher wrote with them as compared to the participant-observer's writing with the group. The one major role change for the participant-observer was during the scheduled nonstandardized interview. The researcher was alone in the room with each of the six children. The session was videotaped to focus on changes or inconsistencies between the respondent's answers and data that had been collected on the child.

Changes in the observer's attitude, perceptions, or insights were recorded in the reflective field notes so that these subjective feelings could be determined and dealt with as objectively as possible. The nature of each situation (group writing, talking to the teacher, talking to the researcher, talking to peers, etc.) was also noted so that any peculiar aspects could be recorded. By transcribing field notes on a daily basis, the researcher wrote down and analyzed information with a minimum of distortion. Videotape recordings and the journal writings also provided information to corroborate the field notes. The researcher and the teacher discussed the information gathered on a daily basis.

CHAPTER IV FINDINGS

The broad goal of the project was to study children's responses to the use of journals either to write a story or a personal narrative as a whole language approach to writing in kindergarten. The main question for this study was "How do children respond to journal writing as a whole language writing method when used in a kindergarten writing center?" The primary way children responded to journal writing as a whole language method was through verbal interactions and responses to the written dialogue.

The following questions were developed during the course of the study:

1. What types of interactions occur among the kindergarten children and among the children and the adults at the writing center while working in the journals?
2. How do these interactions influence children's writing behaviors?
3. What kinds of written interactions occur among the kindergarten children and their teacher and the kindergarten children and the participant-observer during journal writing?

In this study the researcher acted as a participant-observer. Information was collected daily from five children from three different groups who wrote and drew together at the kindergarten writing center. The sixth child moved during the fourth week of the study. The observations were collected over a 9-week period centered around interactions during writing and oral and written responses to dialogue in the journals. A total of 210 samples of writing and drawing were collected during the study. In order to provide a complete description of the subjects, each of them is briefly introduced. Following the subjects, two isolated journal entries by each child from both the first and last week of the study are presented.

After observing children's responses to journal writing, categories were developed from the information gathered. The three questions, "What types of interactions occur among the kindergarten children and among the children and the adults in the classroom?" "How do these interactions influence children's writing behaviors?" and "What kinds of written interactions occur among the kindergarten children the their teacher and the participant observer during journal writing?" became focal areas of observation. The categories which were helpful in developing information on journal writing as a whole language writing method included kinds of things children say before writing, kinds of things children say during writing, kinds of things children say

after an adult reads the dialogue to them, reactions children have to the dialogue, kinds of things children say to adults, kinds of things children say to peers, and reactions to writing of peers. Structural questions were then asked to verify these categories, break them into subheadings, and to conduct additional observations. Taxonomies were developed from across the category relationships. Data which explained journal writing were organized from the categories into interactions with self, interactions from child to adult, interactions from adult to child, interactions with peers, and responses to dialogue. These interactions and the responses to the dialogue provided the substance of the findings. The written products comprised one segment of the journal writing process. The interactions were critical in understanding the entire writing sequence told by the kindergarten child. Examination of the interaction taxonomies and responses to the dialogue suggested the focus for the analysis. The focus was on the substance of the interactions and responses to the dialogue and how both directed the child's writing. The analysis led to a more extensive description of what occurs when a child interacts with self, peers, and adults.

Each of these taxonomies is discussed with examples from the subjects to both verify and clarify the description. Following interactions with self, peers, and adults, the influence of interactions on children's writing,

the role of dialogue in the journals, and additional findings are discussed.

Subjects

Shirley

Shirley is a white female, the youngest member of her family. She has one older sister and lives with both parents. Her father and mother both work outside the home. When working in small readiness groups, Shirley was assigned to the highest group in her class. The teacher considered Shirley's number of interactions to be normal for a kindergarten child. Shirley wrote her first journal as a present to her father who was on deployment in the Navy.

On the first day at the journal writing center Shirley wrote only what she could spell or copy, but by the second day she was writing phonetically. During the first 2 weeks of the study, Shirley could not read what she wrote. For example, on Day 2 Shirley wrote "IWLBA MCrMFryouonhlwn," translated as "I will be a mushroom for you on Halloween." When she finished the sentence, she said to the researcher, "Tell me what I wrote again?--I can't read it." During the remainder of the study, Shirley rehearsed by rereading her conversation as she was writing.

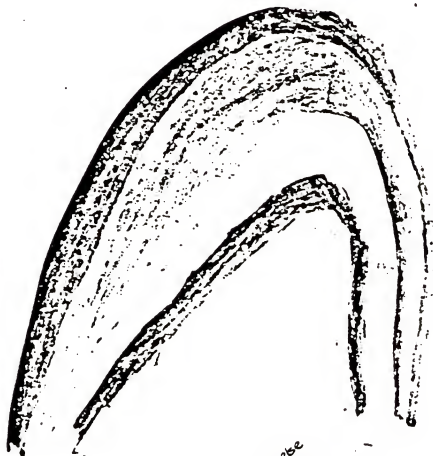
Shirley was adept at risk-taking as defined by Harste et al. (1981). She was willing to take chances on spelling and grammar to make her writing meaningful. Shirley's peers

relied on her to help them. They would ask Shirley to spell words. Shirley would first exaggerate the beginning sound, and then if they were still having trouble, she would give them a letter or two. At first Shirley asked for adult assistance with spelling, but after hearing "just write what you hear" several times, she stopped asking for spelling. Occasionally, Shirley asked for information such as, "Does a toaster evaporate toast?" which was not clearly connected to her drawing or writing. Shirley used interactions with herself, peers, and adults to talk through drawings, to plan, and to provide information.

At first, Shirley responded to the dialogue in a set pattern. She answered the question orally, then she drew a picture, and last she wrote about her response. For instance, in her journal about the zoo, one day she wrote "AndiMtSyJrf," read as "And I might see a giraffe." The teacher wrote, "What else will you see?" Shirley responded orally, "I'm not gonna write about the zoo-there's nothing left! Does anyone know any animals left in the zoo?" A peer responded, "How about monkeys?" Shirley answered, "I can't make monkeys, I'll draw a bear." Shirley drew her bear and then wrote "AndiMtsyaBr," read as "and I might see a bear." During the middle of the fourth week, Shirley became flexible in her responses. She began answering orally, writing at least part of the response, drawing the picture, and finally adding additional writing. For

instance, when she wrote about her sister's going for a walk with her, the teacher wrote, "What will happen next on your walk?" Shirley wrote, "Neushpd" which translated as "Nothing happened." Shirley then drew a picture of two stick figures, one lying in a puddle frowning and the other standing up smiling. Shirley wrote, "andinmywyHmIyFlNNAmddpdl" and read it aloud "and on my way home I fell in a mud puddle." Then she drew the sun and wrote "andvesnwsAY," and the sun was out, alternating between writing, talking, and drawing until the story was completed. During Week 5 when the researcher started writing the dialogue on the top of the new blank page, instead of on the previous page, Shirley began rereading the dialogue question over after the researcher or teacher read it to her. During the final week, Shirley occasionally used words for the dialogue in her own writing. Shirley appeared to learn that she had the ability to write stories and contribute to the writing of her peers. She was able to share her anticipation about her father's deployment with an adult and peers. Shirley became increasingly enthusiastic about writing and used her journals to converse with the teacher and to fantasize about real and imaginary events in her life (Figures 4-1 and 4-2).

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What else
would you
like to say
to your Dad?

Figure 4-1. Shirley's Writing Sample

Who else was in the race? Who won
the race?

AND DNDYMS
AND AIVYDSY
CPTA
ME VICMS
WON the
race

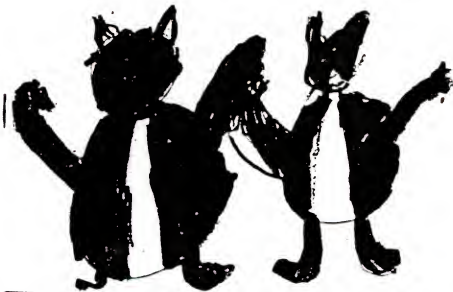


Figure 4-2. Shirley's Writing Sample

Dennis

Dennis is a very active white male who is an only child. He lives part of the week with his mother and the remainder of the week with his father. Both parents are in the Navy. When working in small readiness groups, Dennis was also assigned to the highest group. The teacher considered Dennis to be highly interactive in all settings with both adults and peers. From the very first day Dennis wrote beginning letter sounds for words. Occasionally he wrote sight words such as "AND." However, Dennis used drawing and language as his primary means of telling the story. The drawings often became so involved that the picture was unrecognizable by the end of that day's session. Most of the stories centered on robots, with Dennis as the hero.

Dennis talked to himself or peers about the story as it progressed: "I've drawn a shield and sword for him--he can use a frisbee--I'm going to give him a mouth--I need pink." Dennis at first did not regard left to right, top to bottom rules in his writing. Rather, Dennis placed letters or words on the page as space allowed.

Dennis was often asked by peers for help. He usually gave them the letters he heard. Although some of his peers continued to focus on form, Dennis was not concerned with spelling words. Dennis was often satisfied to use only one letter per word for his stories; he gave peers the entire

phonetic spelling. For example, Dennis said to the researcher, "I don't know how to write so I use the first letter." A peer then stated, "I need to write monkey." Dennis responded, "O.k., M-U-K and put an E under it, you're done." Dennis then wrote on his paper "WMSA" for "We met some aliens."

During the fifth week Dennis began using more phonetic spellings and some conventional spellings in his writing. Dennis also began using left to right, top to bottom movements. Occasionally he would add a period here and there without any conventional usage. Dennis began to use histogram pictures in the writing. For instance, Dennis wrote R [picture of a house] EE [picture of a clump of dirt with grass]. He translated this as "Our house is underground."

Dennis always asked for the dialogue that the teacher had written to be read, then he smiled and started drawing. Occasionally he answered orally, but most often he just started drawing. Dennis started rereading his second book daily. Since his writing consisted of many first letter spellings during the first half of the study, he seemed to rely on memory and pictures to retell the story. Dennis adhered to his story so closely that responding to the dialogue either with pictures or writing did not give him any trouble. For instance, one day he drew about "name robots." The dialogue question was, "Where do your name

robots live?" He responded "WEBWTE," read as "Where else but with the others." Another day the dialogue question was, "What do the robots do every day?" Dennis responded by drawing a huge heart with a ladder on the side and people hammering nails into the heart. "BOOK" is written around the heart, read by Dennis as "bonk." Clearly the picture answers the question; his writing then creates a new angle: "SOAYIQBAGROOT," read as "Some day I will build a giant robot" (Figures 4-3 and 4-4).

Mary

Mary is a black female, the older of two children. She has one younger brother. Mary lives with her mother and brother in a low-income project. Her mother is not employed outside the home. When working in small readiness groups, Mary was assigned to the middle group in her class. The teacher considered her number of interactions to be normal for a kindergarten child. Clay's (1975) copying principle was quite evident in Mary's first journal. She wrote words listed around the room, words she knew, family names, and "I love you." Mary rarely engaged in risk taking as defined by Harste et al. (1981) as evidenced by her wariness at writing with invented spellings. Not only was she unwilling to take chances on spelling and grammar, risk taking seemed to bother her immensely. For instance, on the

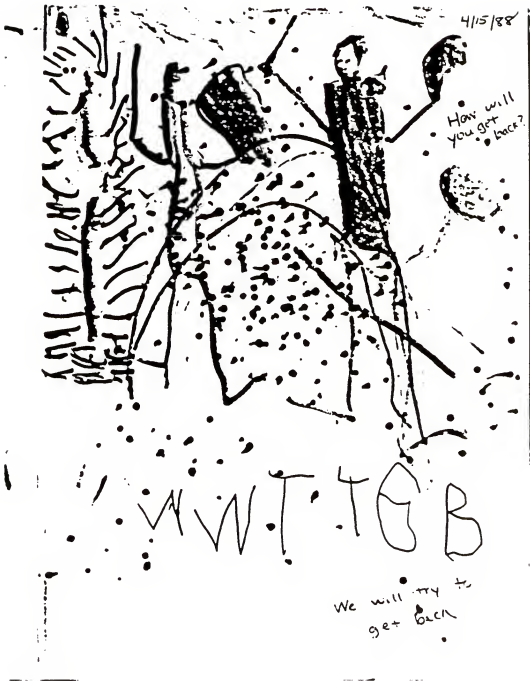


Figure 4-3. Dennis' Writing Sample



Figure 4-4. Dennis' Writing Sample

first day she said to the researcher, "Hey, I made a nest in the tree--I can't write it." The researcher responded, "Whatdo you think the word nest looks like?" Mary wrote "NAST" and sighed heavily. At the end of the first journal, when Mary's letter was sent home the researcher explained what Mary was trying to do and further stated:

One day with much encouragement she wrote "Yom go To Se A Pand" for you might go to see a Panda. What a great message! If we can continue to encourage Mary to take risks and try to write without worrying about spelling (that will come later) I really think our little writer will blossom.

After this letter was sent home, Mary came back and said, "Oh, my Mom loved my book." Mary began to use invented spellings and was able to continue short stories developed over several days.

Although Mary often drew silently without interactions, Mary used interactions for planning what to draw and to talk her way through writing. She also used oral sounds to phonetically sound out words. Mary joined in conversations with peers about various topics and eagerly helped peers write by responding to questions. When the researcher or teacher began writing the dialogue questions at the top of the new page, Mary consistently answered the questions. For instance, Mary wrote "Mcorrnr is My Faat Food To eat," read as, "Macaronni is my favorite food to eat." The dialogue stated, "I like macaroni too. What will you do after you eat?" Mary's written response was, "I anm Go To Wys Das"

for "I am going to wash dishes." By the sixth week Mary and her peers actively attempted to reread or read the dialogue by themselves (Figures 4-5 and 4-6).

Annie

Annie is a Hispanic female, the oldest of three children. She lives with her mother and her stepfather. Annie's mother does not work outside the home, but her stepfather works at the Naval base. When working in small groups, Annie was assigned to the middle group in her class. The teacher considered Annie to be highly interactive with both adults and peers in the classroom. Annie used some invented spellings from the onset of the study. However, most days she just wrote names and strings of letters. Annie displayed a tendency to use the Clay's (1975) recurring principle. For example, Annie would write a string of letters or hearts across the page. Annie's writing was often disconnected from both her picture and the dialogue. Occasionally Annie would answer the dialogue, but with frustration. For example, one day she wrote "Tommy" in her list of writings. The dialogue stated, "Describe Tommy. How old is he? What does he look like?" Her oral response was, "It's a girl." The researcher stated, "On, I didn't know." Annie said, "You know she has a funny hairdo." The researcher replied, "I thought Tommy as your baby brother." Annie answered, "It is and he's 2! But I'm writing another

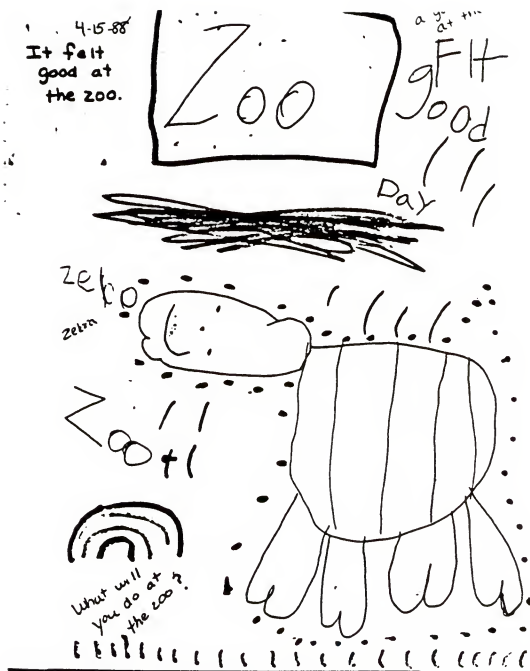


Figure 4-5. Mary's Writing Sample

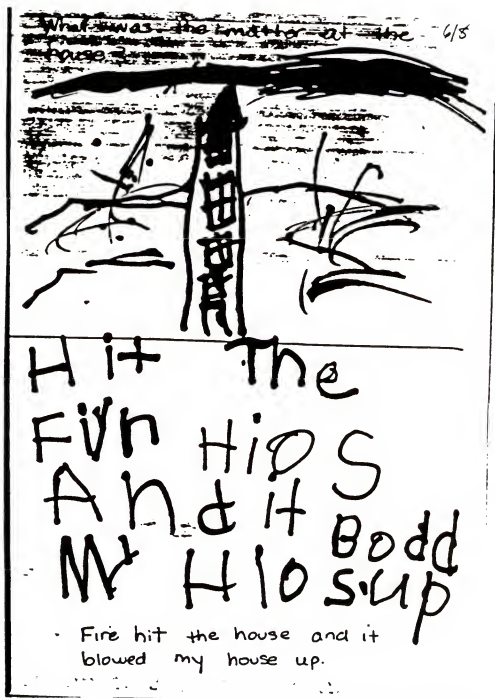


Figure 4-6. Mary's Writing Sample

Tommy." Annie proceeded to carry on a long story about a family of Tommys. Then she drew a girl and a little boy and wrote, "To Sam," "To Jill," and "To Jeni." The teacher wrote, "Tell me about Jill." Again Annie's response was, "No, her name's not Jill, she's invisible. She's going to the beach. She'll bump into a whale." She then drew a girl, reread the dialogue, and wrote "ToJem Bt DU PUEN UR," translated as "To Jen, but did you pee in your pants." This pattern continued until the final week of the study. During the last week Annie started putting the dialogue, drawing, and writing together. She wrote a story that lasted the entire week. The participant-observer said, "Annie, the last few days I think your writing has changed. Now you are telling a long story with pictures." Annie replied, "I know, I kept watching Melissa and Shirley and now I write stories."

As previously mentioned Annie was in the middle group for readiness activities. She knew all the correct letter sounds and had mastered most of the basic communication skills as listed on the Individual Mastery System for kindergarten, yet until the final week she appeared to have little understanding as to the function of writing as a way of communication. Whole language and basic skill advocates continually debate about teaching sounds. The basic skills advocate would teach sounds and letters and expect children to write. Whole language advocates would teach them why we

write to communicate. With reasons to write children will learn sounds and that learning will last. Although she answered dialogue questions orally, Annie did not understand that the questions were stemming from what was written and drawn. Similarly, Annie was very different in her interactions with peers. Often she would jump from topic to topic in her writing based on either direct interactions with peers or on information overheard (Figures 4-7 and 4-8).

John

John is a black male who lives with both parents, two older brothers, and one younger sister. John's father is employed. The family resides in a low-income project. When working in a small group, John was assigned to the lowest group in the class. The teacher considered John to be a very quiet child, although when he spoke he expressed himself well.

The first day of journal writing John copied and drew objects from around the room. Starting on the second day, John would alternate between writing and drawing words or phrases and pictures. For example, he wrote, "HBBE" for happy boy" on Day 2. Although you could see John sounding out words as he wrote, unless you asked him what he wrote immediately, he could not remember. His writing development was just short of being phonetic enough to read.



Figure 4-7. Annie's Writing Sample

Then what will happen? 6-7-89
 TOPTDANTRHM
 FRMEBTYUBTANT
 HMRMESTERIN
 IKNHVASO

To build another home
 for me but you built another
 home for my sister and I
 can have a sister.



Figure 4-8. Annie's Writing Sample

During the second week John created a story about a cat in a Christmas tree. He wrote "YDPLSSEDMKMS" ("Why did the policeman shoot down my Christmas tree?") and "HEIGTGDN" ("How am I gonna get down?").

After the participant-observer or teacher read John the dialogue, the teacher wrote that he would usually smile and start drawing. After the first week usually he would answer the question and then proceed in a new direction. For example, when asked, "What did you do next?" he wrote, "IUYTHMELBMSF," read as, "I went home all myself." He then proceeded to write about a fire. John spoke to the other children to compliment their drawing or picture. He occasionally engaged in conversations with them, but did not usually initiate the conversations. For example, one day a peer pointed to his picture of a cat and asked, "Who's this?" John responded, "My cats." The peer then asked, "Where's your mother?" John responded, "In the back ironing." Interactions to himself were mostly used for planning what to draw and write. He spent a portion of each time watching the other children draw and write (Figures 4-9 and 4-10).

Matthew

Matthew is a black male who lives with his mother and two older brothers. Matthew's mother does not work outside the home. The family lives in a low-income project. When



Figure 4-9. John's Writing Sample



Figure 4-10. John's Writing Sample

pupils were assigned to small readiness groups, Matthew was assigned to the lowest group. Matthew moved after 4 weeks into the study. Matthew would write random letters to tell a story. Occasionally, he would ask a peer for a beginning letter for some of the words. He is always able to dictate a story to the participant-observer or teacher at the end of his writing. Several points made Matthew a unique subject; he was able to help peers better than he was able to write for himself. For instance, a peer said, "I want to write ball." Michael responded, "It starts like a B." He traced the letter in the air for him, but when it came to writing for himself he struggled to write any letters. Secondly, although Matthew was not writing developmentally as well as the other subjects, he was able from the first day to carry on a dialogue story. He clearly understood the intent of the dialogue and used it when answering in pictures and later dictation to the participant-observer. Although Matthew did not stay in the classroom for the entire project, these special traits made him a unique subject in the group (Figure 4-11; Table 1).

Interactions During Journal Writing

Interactions with Self

The primary interactions kindergarten children made during the study were in speaking aloud to themselves. Interactions allowed them to plan what to draw or write for

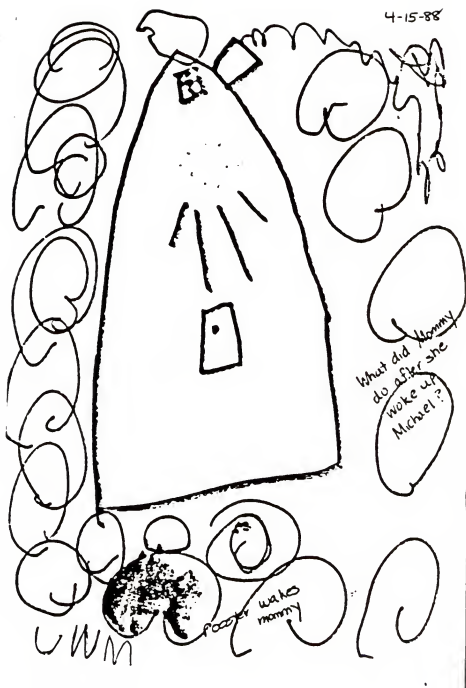


Figure 4-11. Matthew's Writing Sample

Table 1

Subjects

	<u>Sex</u>		<u>Readiness Group</u>			<u>Race</u>			# of Writing Samples
	M	F	High	Medium	Low	Black	White	Hispanic	
Shirley	X		X				X		37
Dennis	X		X				X		40
Mary		X		X		X			42
Annie		X		X				X	37
John	X				X	X			39
Matthew	X				X	X			15*
Total									210

*Moved at the end of 4 weeks.

topic selection, to plan or organize as the action progressed during their writing, or to plan the next writing sequence. Self-interactions served the functions of enhancing the writing process and allowing children to tell stories at a far more advanced level than they can write.

Two elements of the writing process as used by Calkins (1986) were evident in self-interactions: rehearsing and drafting. They selected topics and planned what to write. Children talked aloud to rehearse their writing. Calkins (1986) suggested rehearsal is used by children in first grade, but kindergarten children in the present study also used rehearsal for planning their writing. Shirley used this strategy throughout the study. For example, Shirley made statements such as "I'll make a spider on a tree," "I can't make a monkey--I'll make a bear," "I'll make a poem book," "There is nothing on my farm, now I will draw a picture," or "Let's see him." Mary rehearsed with such statements as "Now I'll finish drawing," "Now, I'll draw Grandma," or "I'll make a sea and there will be an animal eating lettuce, grown people's food."

John made planning statements which included "It's gonna snow today" before he drew snow on the page, "Me seein another dog," "A cat will live by himself," and "All these people will be happy." All these statements were made immediately before drawing or writing.

Dennis used self-interactions to clarify his thought processes with statements such as "I don't know what I'll write yet--hmm my mind can't think of anything yet" and "Let's see what do I want to draw?"

Annie talked constantly and changed flow throughout the morning. Examples of typical statements made were "I think I'll draw Chef Combo," "I'll write about Cinderella," "I need to make some animals," and "I'll have four spooky doors."

Much of the storytelling which accompanies the writing elicited the most common and powerful use of self-interaction. Storytelling was used to plan or draft the writing as the action in the story developed. Self-interactions supported the drafting part of the writing process in another way. At one time or another each of the subjects made sounds of words to help with invented spelling. For example, Mary said, "What about zebra, hmm ZZZEERA." She then wrote, "ZERA" and said to herself, "That's it!" This self-interaction facilitated the flow of the writing.

One type of self-interaction was rereading their own writing, another was to figure out what they had written, and the third type of self-interaction was to continue drafting the piece. Periodically, when drafting, children used oral language to confirm what they had written. However, more importantly from a standpoint of whole

language, the story telling enveloping the writing and drawing was often rich in language. By talking to themselves stories which were beyond their writing and drawing abilities were heard. The example set forth illustrates this point. As Mary was drawing a bus, sun, and tree, she elaborated:

I'm going to see my mama and her mama, I'm walking up to the bus to catch the plane, I mean dog track. I'm drawing me with a suitcase. I'm drawing a tree I can stand under for shade. Here's my bus coming to pick me up and take me to Alabama to see my mother, father, and grandmother.

She wrote "The Lilm We sfun By By ALL," which she read as "The Alabama Alabama was fun Bye Bye All." Clearly, the interaction surrounds and expands on the picture and writing to make a complete story.

Dennis was especially adept at planning or rehearsing with self-interactions as the oral action progressed. At times he became so absorbed in his monologue he seemed oblivious to others.

This is the satellite dish. The t.v.'s turning itself off. They're getting ready to sleep. They can change. The satellite dish can change. It's my good friend's robot. This is his hand. That's his other hand and a dinosaur. The feet of the dinosaur are the feet of the robot. The feet of the robot are the hands of the dinosaur. This is my robot.

The drawing included many stick figure robots. His writing was "WH1000OR," read as "We have 10,000 robots," as the summary of the story he had told orally.

Annie had more difficulty with monologues because her planning was disorganized and her ideas fluctuated throughout the writing time. Even though she talked to herself through the writing and drawing the end result was rather disjointed. Both her oral and written messages were unorganized. On other occasions Annie was able to share thoughts and ideas in an organized way, such as during sharing time and story dramatizations. When writing was involved, Annie became disoriented. "I'm gonna draw Minnie Mouse. I'm gonna sell my Mom this book. Minnie Mouse has some earrings on. I'm gonna write about Minnie Mouse." She has drawn her mom, two trees, and a house. She writes "MoMm NuVmS," which she read as "Mom, Minnie Mouse."

John also used interactions with self, but he was able to talk about the story and write captions for the pictures. His oral story is clear, without hearing the story the drawing and writing do not form a coherent message or story. For instance, John wrote a continuing saga of a cat in a tree in one of his journals. He drew the cat and wrote "NEGN" and says "Not again!" He then expanded "the cat turned into a person, the person turned into a tree, the tree turned into a policeman, and the policeman shot down the tree." He wrote "ISEPLS" and read it as "I see a policeman." He then sounded out "YDPLSSEDMKMS" and read it as "Why did the policeman shot down my Christmas tree?" He added "HEIGHTGDN," read as "How am I gonna get down?"

Interactions with Peers

The written products were only one part of the total story. The subject's oral compositions completed the total story schema. Interacting with peers also involved a major portion of time at the writing center. This section continues to address the question "What types of interactions occur among the kindergarten children?" Peers served as an audience for making comments, evaluating, providing information, helping, and story telling.

Comments were defined as observations which were not based on a value judgment. For instance when a peer commented to Matthew, "It looks like a bomb." He responded, "It's a USA rocket." Other comments included "I hope you're drawing a race car cause that's what it looks like," "This is me right here," and "I could draw chipmunks saying yeah-- like a mouse with a stripe on his back." Comments to peers such as these served the purpose of observing the writing of others without much effect on either peers' drawing or writing.

Unlike comments, evaluation exchanges by peers involved value judgments. Interactions along these lines served the purpose of communicating how the picture or writing is rated by the peer. The exchanges which follow typified this evaluation type of peer interaction.

Annie: "Stop copying off of us."
 Peer: "I'm not, I'm putting up smoke."
 Dennis: "That's an ugly picture."

Peer: "That don't look like a bear. A bear is big and fat."
 Shirley: "I made it as fat as I could."
 Peer: "That's good, what did you do?"
 Shirley: "I dotted the ABCs so little kids could learn."
 Shirley: "I'm making a palace."
 Peer: "It doesn't look nice."
 Mary: "I like it, Shirley."
 Mary: "I never saw a blue plane in my life."
 Peer: "It looks cute."

For Annie, story writing remained unfocused until the last week of the study. Peer evaluations resulted in frequent changes in topic. The other subjects did not appear to make any drastic changes as a result of such evaluations. The other subjects used planning with peers when they needed assistance with ideas or spellings, but did not change ideas when criticized.

For example, one day Dennis and Mary got into a long discussion of his drawing of a large heart with robots hammering away in an effort to build a new robot. Around the scene he wrote "Book, book, book."

Mary: "Why did you write book, book, book?"
 Dennis: "No, it's bonk, bonk, bonk."
 Mary: "You wrote book."
 Dennis: "No, it's like kabonk, kabonk."
 Mary: "Then it should start with a k."
 Dennis: "Listen to your heart."
 Mary: "It still says book, book."
 Dennis: [sighed heavily] "Just listen, o.k.?"

His writing remained "Book" pronounced "Bonk." Although Mary was trying to change his invented spelling to

conventional spelling, Dennis was perseverating on the message and did not give in to this type of criticism.

Information between peers was given freely. There appeared to be limited hesitation about providing information which might be useful to a peer. Some peer interaction was given to provide companionship or to help sustain the efforts of a peer. Misinformation was regarded as useful also: "Write the same story, it doesn't matter if our pictures are different," "Disney World is a big state," and "Did you know the tooth fairy uses your tooth to make money?" are a few examples. Information that was valid was similarly tossed about: "If you say he's gonna suffocate, that's what you should write," "If you get marker on your skin, just use soap and water," and "My mom's pocketbook got stolen." This information supplemented the writing activity, but once again did not have an observed powerful effect on writing and drawing.

The peer interactions which in turn influenced the course of writing and drawing were interactions which involved the purpose of giving or receiving help and asking or responding to questions from the audience. In this respect, they shared an emergent knowledge of writing. These questions and help centered around either spelling or forming letters or clarifying and expanding stories. Although John was reported and observed to be the least

interactive of the group, he used peers' questions to expand and clarify his ideas and to help with invented spellings.

Peer: "What's this?"

John: "A dog eating."

Peer: "Who's this?"

John: "My cats."

Peer: "Where's your mom?"

John: "In the back ironing."

Peer: "How do you spell bud?"

John: "BWRJ"

Peer: [looks doubtful]

John: "I gave you the best letters I could."

The other subjects also used questions and helped peers.

Dennis often gave peers most letters in a word while using only initial consonants to write his own stories.

Occasionally, however, he was discouraged with their attempts.

Peer: "How do you spell chicken?"

Dennis: "Listen ch-i-ck-en."

Peer: "Help me."

Dennis: "Write CCKN, you're driving me crazy."

Shirley was the most willing and able to give help.

She would try to help the children at her table by exaggerating the beginning sound until the peer guessed the correct response. In turn, she never asked for help with invented spelling, but did look for new ideas.

Shirley: "I don't know what to do."

Peer: "How about a poem book?"

Shirley: "I don't know how to do Mary had a little lamb."

Peer: "How about a dot-to-dot book?"

Shirley: "I'll make a dot-to-dot and it's showing you color in it."

Shirley then writes "DWVYDTTDT And VY CWry CVt evvyT smcwrn vy DS" read as "Draw the dot-to-dot and then color it every time the same color on the dots."

Occasionally stories develop as a result of a picture. One picture drawn by Mary consists of a tree, a man, some bushes, and a house. The story developed into a fantasy.

Mary: "Here's a stranger that kidnapped my Mom.
He choked her, now he is coming to get me.
Dad's in bed. I'm awake."
"Oh God! You should sleep with your Dad!"
John: "I don't know his name. It's a stranger
man--or woman."
"Scream."
Mary: "Sometimes it don't work."
John: "Does for me."
Mary: "My Mom says scream, yell, holler, kick,
everything."
"Wait its Mr. B."

This, of course, ended with much hilarity at the thought of Mrs. B's husband being a party to such a horrid tale.

This story perhaps typifies the entire importance of interaction among peers as a critical part of writing. To look merely at the product gives a very small indication of the story-telling ability that feeds into the process. In the same vein, the questions, information, comments, and evaluations which are parts of peer interaction as a whole shape the process of writing and provide an audience for the compositions. Communicating both orally and on paper together solidify the idea of communication as a whole language process.

Interactions with Adults

Interactions between children and adults occurred throughout the study. This section addresses the remainder of the question, "What types of interactions occur among the children and the adults?" During the first week of the study there were many child-to-adult interactions centered on reassurance and help. For example, "What'll I do, there is no room to draw," "How's that?" "Is this O.K?" and "Tell me what I wrote again. I can't read it." Adult to child interactions at this stage centered upon encouraging the child to try; such phrases as "Just write so you can read it," "Go ahead and try it," and "Fine, keep going" were heard. After the first week, child to adult interactions for reassurance and help became minimal as interactions with self and peers became more frequent.

Throughout the study children occasionally provided adults with information, often unrelated to their story. Information included such statements as "A toaster evaporates toast," "See my earring?" "I told Mommy and Daddy about this book," "My mom loved my book," "My uncle smoked a cigar and it stunk," and "I never forget a word my Mommy tells me."

Informal questions were asked by both the participant-observer and the teacher to clarify what was happening as the children drew and wrote. Questions such as "What are

you writing about?" "Can you tell me about this?" and "Who is that?" were used to elicit information.

The answer to the question, "What types of interactions occur among kindergarten children and among the children and the adults at the writing center while working in the dialogue journals?" is interactions with self, peers, and adults. Interactions with self served to aide the writing process, especially for rehearsing, drafting, and enhancing storytelling abilities. Interactions with peers served the function of providing an audience for comments, evaluations, providing information, help, and storytelling. Interactions with adults were infrequent, but did serve the purpose of providing reassurance and help and clarifying what the children wrote.

The Influence of Interactions on Children's Journal Writing

A second question explored "How do the interactions influence children's writing behaviors?" Interactions affected children's writing in several ways. First, interactions with self, peers, and adults helped children use a wide variety of language functions in their writing process. Second, interactions fostered planning throughout the story-telling or writing personal narrative process. Third, interactions played different roles for different children. Fourth, interactions provided opportunities for

children to learn that their words and pictures communicate a message or story.

In the present study, children's interactions and writing were used as in Tough's (1973) functions of language. Tough (1973) described four functions of language. In the directive function a child reports on actions or sequences of actions which occur with self and others. The interpretative function was used by the child to interpret, or relate, perceptions of what has happened in his past or present experiences. The third function is the projective function when the child used his imagination to project situations which can be tied to samples of previous experiences. The relational function was different from the first three in that it involved relationships between people either to maintain needs or to interact with others in socially acceptable ways. The directive function, interpretative function, and the projective function were all used for planning purposes. In personal narrations as well as stories the directive function was used to report on actions, for example, "ImwrtgABKRfMDAD" read as "I am writing a book for my Dad." The interpretative function was used to interpret what happened in past or present experiences. For example, Annie was heard telling Shirley, "When my Dad came home last time, it was on a plane and it came from the ship. The ship was huge and gray and it will happen again in 3 1/2 days."

The projective function was used to project imaginary situations based on previous experiences. For example, Shirley used her experiences of going to Disney World to create an entire journal of going to Disney World, entering races with the Disney characters, and sleeping in the palace. The relational function was used in the dialogues between the teachers and the students, both on paper and in oral interactions. Each child used interactions with the teacher to sustain a personal interaction or to provide the impetus for a story or message. The relational function was also used with peers to protect interests, for example, "I was using that green marker!" to express an affective need, "This is a good story, right?" or to justify needs such as "If you take all the markers, I won't have any to write with!" Children's interactions were used in harmony with the functions of language and provided the framework for planning during the journal writing episode.

Children used the interactions for rereading what they had written so they could remember it long enough to dictate their invented spellings to an adult. Often, Dennis, Shirley, and Mary used interactions with self for going back to the beginning of their journals, or back to the beginning of their current story, and rereading their words and pictures to plan for that day's writing. At times the rereading involved peer interactions but rarely did children read with an adult. Annie did not reread what she wrote.

She was not able to plan or revise by rereading. Annie did not seem to understand that pictures and words together can communicate a story. Because John was not very interactive, it was difficult to ascertain whether rehearsal behavior was occurring. He did occasionally go back through his journal, gazing at the pictures, but the purpose for this was not clearly observed in his interactions.

Another way in which interactions were used in planning or drafting was for help with invented spelling. For example, Dennis tried to write "When I get back to earth." After saying it aloud he asked a peer, "How will I write when?" The peer suggested W-E-N, and Dennis continued writing. Another day when Annie was having trouble, Dennis tried to help, "Sound it out, Annie," he said. She responded, "I try but my head won't tell me." He then helped her spell the word. Interactions with self were also used as children said a word aloud slowly while writing it.

When children heard peers interacting and observed their behavior, these interactions had an impact on their planning story themes and ideas for writing. Peer interaction can provide individual planning, collaborative planning, or construction of writing with no clear story line.

Peer interaction for individual planning was used for new ideas or for embellishing a story. For instance, one child in the class came back from a trip to Disney World.

He started writing a factual account of his events. Shirley conversed with him and started planning a fantasy about going to Disney World. Each day she wrote about herself and the Disney characters who were engaged in races, played games, and spent the night in the castle. The fantasy went on for ten days. Clearly interactions with her peer helped her plan a new story. Shirley and other peers often indirectly encouraged Dennis about his robot fantasies. For instance, during a battle Dennis was concocting a batch of "gross ingredients, frogs, arms, bugs, legs, chocolate ice cream, balloons, people's teeth, cats." Several of the boys suggested additions to his list, while several girls loudly said, "YUK!" All of his peers were encouraging Dennis to continue plans for more attention-laden plots in days to come.

Peer interactions were also used to collaborate on writing. On one occasion Mary and a friend purposely set out to plan a story together. Together they sounded out "The Hioux that Jack Bilt." They said to the teacher, "I copied off of her and she copied off of me." They finished their drawing and occasionally commented on their drawings. For instance, Mary drew a crooked house and the peer said, "Your house is falling down." Occasionally direct planning such as this was done by two peers at the beginning of a journal, but they did not seem to have the social ability to continue an entire story together.

Annie constantly used interactions with peers for the construction of writing with no clear purpose. Annie interacted constantly with her peers. Although these interactions helped her plan for the moment, it was not until late in the study that she realized one page filled with isolated ideas of her own and peers' together would not communicate a story or tell about a picture. Therefore, for most of the study her peers were not helping her plan a story. She was merely using isolated fragments of their interactions to produce writing and drawing on paper.

In summary, interactions were used for the directive function, interpretative function, projective function, and relational function. The interactions were used in harmony for the purpose of helping children plan the writing for rehearsal purposes and giving simple invented spellings to enable a peer to write. Interactions with peers provided individual planning, collaborative planning, and construction of writing with no clear story line. These interactions directly and indirectly helped with ideas and themes for writing.

Although children had common purposes for interactions, interactions played different roles for different children. Children used interactions for different purposes. These interactions benefitted each child in different ways. Common purposes for interaction among the subjects were to obtain the use of a writing tool and to gain help with

invented spellings. Children interacted with peers and the teacher so frequently about the pastel markers in particular that all the children were able to recognize new color words such as "orchid," "sea green," and "aqua blue" on the labels of the markers by the fourth week of the study. They could also read "washable" because they needed reassurance that their clothes and hands would come clean.

All the subjects interacted with peers to help with invented spelling. John, Annie, and Dennis gave closer approximations to conventional spellings to their peers than they used in their own writing. Motivation for helping a peer spell correctly was more important than correct spelling in one's own work, especially for Dennis. For example, one day the teacher asked him if he was just going to use one letter spellings for his words. He responded, "It's o.k. because I know how to read it."

The main purpose of interactions for Shirley was to try out several ideas or themes for a new journal. She would say, "Maybe I'll write about a farm, no, maybe the zoo," and continue to talk to herself until she was satisfied with a topic. If a peer overheard her talking, suggestions might be made, but Shirley used her own thoughts and ideas for writing. When asked by the observer if she preferred to write alone or with other children, she responded, "Sometimes both, most of the time at home I write with my sister, she helps me write." The observer then asked, "Do

the kids here ever help you?" Shirley said, "No, not really." For Shirley, that was essentially true; her interactions with self were needed to help her manage her thoughts and try out new ideas, but she did not rely on peers or adults for help in writing. Like Tambrea, a subject in Dyson's and Genisha's study (1982), although Shirley was not influenced by interaction, she might have been helped by responding to others.

Dennis benefitted from interactions mostly by having peers for an audience. Dennis' stories were very exciting. Occasionally, he would include a peer in the picture he drew of his robot adventures. The peer would then encourage him to continue the story on the next day. For example, the peer would say, "What are you going to do with me tomorrow?" or "Am I going to stay in your story for the whole book?" These interactions, coupled with drawing, provided the story as the picture developed. For Dennis, it was the drawing and talking to self and others that was most important. His writing was limited to one or two sentences, more to comply with the teacher's request for writing than to tell the story. Dennis was similar to the subject in Dyson's (1986) study. Action unfolded as the drawing and talking combined to tell the story, for the subject in the present study as well as Dyson's study. Another similarity included dictated texts which were more simplistic than drawing while talking experiences.

Mary benefited from interactions more clearly than Dennis and Shirley. She used verbal interactions with self (talking to self) for planning and invented spellings. Mary often talked herself through her drawing and writing as it progressed. She would exaggerate words and say them slowly in order to hear sounds for invented spellings. Mary also engaged pleasantly with peers about topics of interest. She received help from peers and freely gave help upon request. Although she sometimes was quiet during the writing process, she generally responded to the event as a social activity and eagerly engaged in all conversations with her peers.

John was the quietest of all subjects. It was difficult to record how John verbally interacted with himself because he spoke so quietly. The main use of these quiet interactions with self for John were to plan, to invent spelling for words, to comment on other's writing, or to tell someone more about his pictures when asked. He did not seem to use interactions with peers and adults to a great degree to learn about writing.

Annie used all interactions to try to learn about writing. However, if she interacted with three peers during one writing episode, at least three different pictures or writings might emerge, usually unrelated to one another. Annie was engaging in all the interactions possible, yet during most of the study she did not use these interactions to help focus on an idea for one message or story. Clearly,

Annie's perception of writing was more a haphazard occurrence than actual planning, drawing, and writing. It was only at the end that she was able to filter through the interactions around her enough to understand how to write a related message and picture.

In summary, Dennis and Shirley benefitted mostly by interacting with themselves. Mary was able to write by herself, but enjoyed writing as a social occasion and benefitted from writing with her peers for themes and spelling. John seemed to benefit mostly from speaking quietly to himself and watching peers. Annie needed to filter her interactions to benefit from them.

An important finding is that interaction with self and peers helped the subjects learn that pictures and writing can be used to communicate a message or story. The students learned to communicate by using oral interactions during the writing process. All of the interactions observed, with self, with peers, and with adults, led to a whole language experience of speaking, reading, writing, and listening. By the end of the study all of the children were communicating a thought or an idea on paper to be shared with their peers, teacher, and family. By the end of the nine weeks most of the stories or personal narratives, as evidenced by the samples in the figures, were longer and created a message or story. For example (Figures 4-1 and 4-2), during the first week of the study Shirley wrote, "RamBvSirBtyfl" read as

"Rainbows are beautiful." During the last week of the study she wrote, "MnyMsAnd DnlDk And Al Vy Dsy Crtr And Me VI CMS Won the race," read as "Minnie Mouse and Donald Duck and all the Disney characters and me, the chipmunks won the race." The latter message was longer and more complex. With the exception of John, who still used a lot of labeling pictures to tell a story, the other subjects all were creating longer, more complex messages or stories than at the start of the study (Figures 4-3 to 4-9).

In summary, children's writing development was influenced through interactions with self, peers, and adults. Interactions helped children use a wide variety of language functions in their writing. Interactions also enabled the children to plan their stories or personal narratives. Children benefited from the interactions in various ways depending on their feelings of competence as writers, their need for help or talking aloud, and their interest in being a part of the social occasion. From data presented it is clear that interaction played an important role in facilitating drawing and writing communication.

The Role of Dialogue in the Journals

In this section "What kinds of written interactions occur among the kindergarten children and their teacher and the participant-observer during journal writing becomes a focal point?" Children were able to interact with the

teacher either by writing and drawing about personal information or by developing a story. Dialogues written in journals were used in several ways. During the first half of the study, responses to drawing and writing were written on the page. For instance, one day just prior to a zoo field trip Shirley drew a picture of a lion, a zebra, and a snake. She wrote, "And ImtSYALUn ANdImusuazbu," read as "And I might see a lion and I might see a zebra. The teacher wrote on the page, "What else might you see at the zoo?" During the first half of the study, the dialogue and the journal entries did not consistently reflect flowing conversations between the teacher and Mary, John, and Annie. During the second half of the study responses were made at the top of the next page. Children responded to the new procedure by staying closer to the theme. During the last half of the study each journal contained 10 pages of a flowing dialogue between the teacher and four of the five subjects. Shirley and Dennis responded to the dialogue the entire 9-week period. It took Annie until the last week to relate a complete story.

The academic level of the children was reflected in their responses for four of the five children. Shirley and Dennis, assigned to the top readiness group, responded to the dialogue consistently throughout the study. Shirley answered as if in a conversation. For example, in response to the teacher's question, "What else happened on your trip

to the farm?" Shirley wrote, "NeueHpdAndINmywyIyFlNNAMdPdI AndveSNWZA+And [sister's name] DdntFl iN vymd PdIAND [sister] HZpty LUHyr," translated as "Nothing else happened and on my way home I fell in a mud puddle and the sun was out and [sister] didn't fall in the mud puddle and [sister] has pretty long hair."

Dennis did respond but was eager to get to the elaboration or the next scene. For instance, in response to writing about two children in a rocket, the teacher wrote, "Where will you go?" Dennis responded, "WENWEGTOTMON WEWL DRAWIWTGHABI," translated as "When we go to the moon we will drop weapons and I will give him a black eye."

Mary was assigned to a middle readiness group. She wavered between responding sometimes and responding fully during the first half of the study. During the last five weeks, she responded fully through her drawing and writing. An example of this is when Mary was writing about a trip on a plane with her Mom. The teacher asked, "Where will you go with your mom?" Mary responded, "Me and My Jac Moma wat to mitas," translated as "Me and my mom just went to the mountains."

John, who was assigned to the lower group, did not respond the first week. During Weeks 2, 3, and 5, he responded sometimes. During Week 4 and Weeks 6 through 9 he responded to the dialogue on a regular basis. As an example of John's response to the dialogue, "Where will you go in

your truck?" John wrote "IUVT HM ELBMSF," translated as "I went home all by myself."

Annie was assigned to the middle group. Although she had mastered all readiness skills including comprehension skills, beginning sounds, and letters, she never responded to the dialogue during the first four weeks of the study. She sometimes responded during Weeks 5 and 6. During Weeks 7 and 8, she did not respond. During the times she did not respond, she was also drawing pictures and coming up with an unmatched story. In fact, she stated to a peer one day, "Let's write the same story, it doesn't matter if our pictures are different." During the final week of the study, Annie responded fully to the dialogue with pictures and writing. When asked by the researcher about the change she responded, "I just watched Christie and Shirley and then I knew how to do it!"

The present study reflects the current emphasis on communication as the most important aspect of writing development. Findings concur with the definition of terms by Harste et al. (1981), whereby writing development is not linear, but occurs in harmony. Harste et al. (1981) described terms, rather than stages, which children encounter in their writing development. This writing development is not a linear process but the terms occur in harmony. The first term, text intent, is the expectation that print will make sense. Negotiability is the term used

to describe the writer's knowledge of language and print to make print meaningful. Risk taking involves the writer's willingness to take chances with spelling and grammar in order to make writing more meaningful. The last term is fine tuning language with language and denotes how what is learned from one language experience becomes a resource for further oral and written expression.

The terms, text intent, negotiability, risk-taking, and fine tuning are all areas observed in the present study. Annie seemed to have a vague idea of text intent, yet was obviously disappointed when her print did not make sense. She believed that the text intent should magically change to suit her purposes of drawing or continuing a story from day to day. All of the subjects used negotiability, the term used to describe the writer's knowledge of language and print to make print meaningful. Although four of the five students were avid risk-takers, the fifth child, Mary, struggled with message or perfection throughout the study. For Mary, risk-taking was a challenge. Fine tuning, a term which describes how what is learned from one language experience becomes a resource for further oral and written language, was not found to be a linear response. Daily observations did not reflect this development. Indeed, just as one development occurs it becomes overgeneralized for a while and then re-emerges. In order to observe fine tuning,

it is necessary to look at the total 9-week experience as well as daily experiences.

Dialogue in the journals also provided the subjects with the teacher as an active audience for their writings and allowed them the opportunity to be an audience for reading the teacher's responses. Through the interactions with peers, children were also an active audience for making comments, evaluating peers' drawing or writing, giving information, helping another child, or embellishing a story.

Children used the dialogue for reading and rereading their dialogue and that of their peers, tracing over the dialogue, and occasionally using words from the dialogue in their own writing that day.

The observations and dialogue in the journals clearly indicated that by the end of the study, these journals were used by the students as a means of interacting with the teacher for the purpose of communicating personal information or stories. The statements and questions written by the teacher were used by the students for reading, rereading, tracing, and as models for conventional writing patterns.

Additional Findings

Three questions were addressed in the findings of the study. Two additional findings were also important to the response of kindergarten children writing in

journals. One finding was an emergent knowledge of reading what they had written, and the other involved the student's feelings about writing.

At the beginning of the study the children could not read what they wrote. For example John wrote, "DFTKL," while saying "I wrote different colors." When the participant-observer asked him to read it back he just smiled and shrugged his shoulders. He did not remember what he had written. Similarly, Shirley sounded out, "I am going" written as, "IMFGWG" and continued talking and writing "to make a book about animals," written as "ToMkaBkBTANMLS." When she was finished she said to the participant observer, "Tell me what I wrote again? I can't read it."

By the end of the study all of the subjects were able to tell the participant observer what they had written. When the participant observer asked individually, "Can you read what you write?" each of the subjects responded, "Yes!" The responses were accompanied by mannerisms and facial gestures that indicated surprise at being asked such an obvious question.

An additional finding involved the subject's feelings about writing. Subjects came willingly to the center on a daily basis and expressed great interest in starting a new journal. Comments such as "My Dad loved my book" and "I read it to my whole family" were expressed. Students

expressed appreciation for their peers' writing and laughed at each other's stories in particular. The participant observer concluded from the observations that the children found writing in their journals to be a positive experience.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Journal writing in kindergarten is a relatively new area of study. The present study addressed the question, "How do children respond to journal writing as a whole language writing method when used in a kindergarten writing center?" in a predominantly basic skills classroom. The present study produced two main findings which are of critical importance to a whole language approach of speaking, listening, writing, and reading. The first finding reflects the importance of young children learning to write for communication, i.e., in a relatively short, but sustained time period kindergarten children who write in journals learn that their writing can be used to communicate a message or a story and they begin to use teacher's responses in their writing. The second finding involves the importance of children's speaking and listening during writing in their journals, i.e., verbal interactions with self and peers support the journal writing processes and help children develop a sense of audience. Each of these findings will be discussed in relationship to its importance to the story.

Finding 1: Communicating a Message or Story

Children developed an understanding that they could communicate a written message or a story by responding to the teacher's dialogue or comments in their journals. Questions or statements written by the teacher or the child helped the child realize they can communicate with an adult on paper. Children used the teacher's written statements and questions to maintain an ongoing conversation or story in their journals. Children read and reread the adult written questions and comments. Early in the study the children had a difficult time maintaining an ongoing written conversation with an adult to produce a story or personal narrative. During this time the children were unable to use writing as a form of communication. As the study progressed the children began to acquire the ability to converse in writing with the teacher to produce stories and personal narratives. The ability to carry on a written conversation for several 10-day periods shows the importance of journals in fostering the competence of kindergarten children who learned that writing is an important part of communication.

Annie, a child in the study, seemed to typify the power of the journal writing process for learning how to communicate a written message or a story. Throughout most of the study Annie appeared to be disorganized in her attempts at communicating through the processes of drawing and writing. Annie's writing was disconnected and unrelated

to the teacher's responses and questions. Annie did not understand that drawing a picture and writing about the picture could form a message or a story. She did not use the questions and responses to help plan or organize the writing for the day. Annie would often disregard the teacher's written response entirely. However, during the last week of the study Annie used the teacher's responses together with her drawing and writing to write a continuous related story. Annie finally realized that her writing and drawing, together with the teacher's statements and questions, formed a message or a story.

At the conclusion of the study all of the subjects were confident in their ability to read what they had written. In addition, they were able to recognize and use words from the teacher's written responses. Clearly, the kindergarten subjects were able to gather meaning from print. The teacher's process of using dialogue comments or questions on their papers in their writing strengthened their emerging literacy.

Finding 2: Verbal Interactions

The second major finding involved children's use of verbal interactions and their development of a sense of audience during the journal writing. Verbal interactions with self and peers support the journal writing processes and help children develop a sense of audience. The role or

function of interactions with self was to help children organize, plan, rehearse, and draft their stories. The interactions were critical to the evolving written message or story.

The children became an audience for peer statements about each other's writing through interactions. By acting as an audience children were able to make comments, evaluate, provide information, and embellish their own and other's stories. Through these interactions the children were able to share with each other their emergent knowledge of writing.

Peers provided an audience which motivated writing and the development of the writers. Observations of a peer's writing and drawing had a powerful influence on the writing process. For example, one subject was not relating her story to the drawing and dialogue. During the final week her writing and drawing began to tell a story and flow with the dialogue. When questioned about her writing, she responded, "Now I understand because I watched Shirley and Christie and now I know what to do." By being an audience for Shirley's and Christie's writing, this subject learned to relate her story to the drawing and dialogue. Solicited help from a peer centered around spelling, forming letters, or clarifying and expanding stories. By the end of the study all of the children confidently used peers as an audience to enhance their writing.

Interactions with self were also critical to the writing process. The children interacted with themselves in planning what to write in two different ways. Four of the children rehearsed by making deliberate verbalizations before starting to write while the fifth child was disorganized and did not plan or rehearse. Talking aloud to self while working in the journal was a typical behavior used for rehearsing and drafting pictures and story lines. The children made spoken observations to themselves and in the process heard the phonetic sounds of words. The planning and drafting self-interaction conversations further integrated the whole language approach.

Verbal interactions with self and peers were significant in helping children plan and embellish their stories. Often peers would encourage a child to continue a story or to include themselves in the story. An observer listening to the interactions was provided with more information and a more complete story than by just looking at the actual product of a kindergarten child's writing. For example, Mary wrote, "WEMTGO ON a JT" translated as, "We might go on a jet." Although the statement appears isolated, the conversation with self and peers elaborates on the topic as Mary talks, "We are going to Alabama to see my grandma when school is out and we'll probably stay a long time. We might go on a plane or on a bus. Maybe then I'll write about when we go there what happens." Clearly the

interactions support and elaborate on the statements, "We might go on a jet" to form a more detailed story. Mary also begins to plan for the next writing episode as she says, "Maybe then I'll write about. . . ."

In summary, verbal interactions support the writing processes of children. An audience of peers as well as an opportunity to talk to self motivates writing and helps in the processes of planning, writing, and embellishing stories or personal narratives.

Relationship of Findings to Previous Studies

Finding 1: Communicating a Message or a Story

Writing for the purpose of communication is a common theme for writing research (Muscrope, 1987; Buxton, 1982; Hipple, 1985; Statom, 1987; Bode, 1988). Children are urged to communicate a message or a story through their writing. Given this common theme, studies of kindergarten children's writing focus on a child's written product for a specific day. These daily writings yield isolated concepts about specific events.

A major contribution of the present study is the evidence that a kindergarten child is actually able to sustain an ongoing written conversation, story, or personal narrative over several 10-page journals. Unlike previous studies (Muscrope, 1987; Buxton, 1982; Hipple, 1985) the researcher posed the additional challenge to the child to go

beyond drawing and writing for meaning on one day, to writing a 10-day personal narrative or story enhanced by written comments and questions by the teacher. The present study thus differs from previous studies which viewed isolated concepts or communication which children produced during one day's writing. The major difference is that in this study a picture of a boy labelled, "This is my brother" would be expanded on by the child on the following day after the teacher had written a comment in his journal, such as "What do you like to do with your brother?" From this encouragement children were motivated to produce a story or narration which continued day after day.

Typically in previous studies kindergarten children's writing consisted of statements about their drawing which they dictated to an adult (Buxton, 1982; Dyson, 1988). Children did not need to rely on adults for dictation in the present study. The present study supports the concept that kindergarten children are able to communicate a written message, irrespective of their level of writing development. Children did not need to dictate to an adult. They were confident in their ability to produce a story or a message by using invented spellings.

The child's confidence in producing a written story or message by responding to the teacher's questions and statements motivated the kindergarten children in the present study to continue their stories. Previous research

describes elementary school children (Statom, 1987; Bode, 1988) who were also motivated by teacher questions and comments written in their journals. The children in this and previous studies were all motivated to continue writing by dialogue with the teacher. However, children in the present study were considerably younger than the children Bode (1988) and Statom (1987) describe in their studies.

In previous writing research (Hall & Duffy, 1987), dialogue usually centers around personal information such as personal letters between the child and the teacher. In the present study children selected their own topics which allowed them to write either a story or a personal narrative. The teacher then became an audience for the child's message by responding in writing.

Finding 2: Research Related to Interactions

Verbal interactions with self and others during the writing process is a focal point of this study. Previous studies (Dyson, 1981; Dyson, 1986; Dyson & Genishi, 1987; Dyson, 1988; Calkins, 1986; Kasten & Clark, 1987; Hall & Duffy, 1987) all relate to this finding, i.e., verbal interactions with self and peers support the journal writing processes of children and help them develop a sense of audience. The present study adds to previous studies by providing evidence that at a young age children are able to

interact effectively to help themselves and their peers with writing.

Unlike previous studies of interaction (Dyson, 1986; Dyson, 1988), subjects in the present study interacted with self and peers to create their own message or story, without relying on dictation to an adult. The children's interactions with self and peers center around rehearsal and drafting for topic selection and planning throughout the writing process. The children used interactions during journal writing to test new ideas and to obtain feedback about words or phrases. Calkins (1986) suggested that kindergarten children use oral rehearsal only in the immediate drawing or writing context. Findings in the present study indicate kindergarten children use both rehearsal and drafting for planning, evaluating, criticizing, and providing information throughout the writing process. In the present study children who use rehearsal and drafting are younger than in previous studies (Calkins, 1986; Kasten & Clark, 1987).

This present study documents the writing behavior of a greater number of subjects over a longer period of time and provides more information about oral interactions between self and other than prior studies. Previous research typically involved one or two children for a short period of time (Dyson, 1981; Dyson, 1986; Dyson & Genishi, 1982;

Dyson, 1988). The present study involves the journal writings of five subjects over a 9-week period.

Summary of Relationship of Findings to Previous Studies

Communication, or writing for meaning, is the key facet of the kindergarten writing experience (Muscrope, 1987). Kindergarten children are able to write in journals through dictation (Buxton, 1982). At the elementary school level teachers' responses in journals provide motivation for writing (Statom, 1987). The present study concurs with previous studies in these areas. However, kindergarten children in the present study were challenged to write their own message or story during each of several 10-day periods resulting in extended stories. The children communicated through their own writing with an adult. The adult responses to journals also provided motivation for writing.

In previous studies researchers have also described how children interact during writing, interrelationships between talking, drawing, and dictating stories (Dyson, 1981; Dyson, 1986; Dyson & Genishi, 1982). From the present study more is known about the purposes for oral interaction for learning about audience and for planning. In the present study kindergarten children used drafting and rehearsal for topic selection and planning throughout the writing process. Children were able to write in journals on their own without relying on dictation.

Recommendations

Journal writing in kindergarten is a relatively new area for research in the kindergarten curriculum. Findings in this study concur with previous studies; writing is a valuable experience for the kindergarten child. In this study, findings indicate that interactions are an integral part of the writing process. When given the opportunity to interact verbally with themselves, peers, and in dialogues with an adult, children use these interactions to influence their writing development. Interactions are used to plan, to make revisions, to evaluate peers, to give information, to help another child, and to tell a story. The role of the interactions depends on the individual child's feelings of competence as a writer, the need for help or talking aloud, and the interest in being part of the social occasion.

Dialogues in the journal maintain story progression, ask and answer questions, and provide models of conventional writing. Children use the dialogue model to acquire experience in reading conventional print. Journal writing which includes dialogue with an adult is a valuable experience for young children because it engages them in interactions using verbal and graphic modes to communicate messages and stories.

This next section addresses recommendations for researchers and teachers based on findings of the present study.

Recommendations for Researchers

1. In the present research, a description of interactions during journal writing with peers was described. Children reported informally that their families enjoyed their journals. Further research is needed to document how the letters to parents at the end of each journal affect writing development as well as motivation for writing.

2. During the present study, dialogue was child-initiated. The child wrote and drew, and then the teacher responded by writing in the child's journal. Sometimes it centered on reality, sometimes fantasy, and often a combination. The teacher's dialogue questions were used to promote story development and when appropriate within the context to develop a more personal relationship between the teacher and child. Further research might explore different types of dialogue, such as story telling or relating personal information, with kindergarten children.

3. In the present research, interactions during one social activity, journal writing, were described. Further research might explore in greater detail social implications in journal writing at the kindergarten level, such as interactions when a child is writing alone, with one

peer, in a small group, in a large group, or alone with an adult.

4. The present research was conducted in a classroom with a basic skills orientation with some whole language activities also used. Further research might add to the body of knowledge by using journal writing in a kindergarten classroom that uses a whole language approach rather than a mixed philosophical approach in their curriculum.

5. Each of the subjects combined his or her drawing and writing patterns in various ways throughout the study. Further research might examine the drawing-writing interplay with respect to the writing developmental level of the child.

Recommendations for Teachers

The researcher encourages teachers to use journal writing as an integral part of the kindergarten program. This writing process emphasizes writing as a way of communicating a story or a message. Journal writing cannot be accomplished in a short period of time. In the present research, some children did not fully respond until at least four weeks into the study. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to make a long-term commitment to this teaching technique.

Interactions during writing. Teachers must understand that the interactions children have with self and others are

extremely important in encouraging and enhancing writing. Time for peer interaction and interaction with self is essential to journal writing. Children benefit from interactions for the purposes of planning, rehearsing, revising, providing information, helping peers, evaluating, and story telling. Interactions make writing a noisy activity, but teachers should encourage this productive noise as important to communicating messages or stories.

Heterogeneous grouping. Social interaction with peers becomes more useful when groups become more flexible and heterogeneous according to readiness skills. In the present study, homogeneous groups became heterogeneous when some children left the center early and other children took their place. The newly formed groups were more helpful for some children. When heterogeneous grouping occurred, children having difficulty received help from peers. Writing with different peers also helped children create new ideas and themes for stories. Teachers are encouraged to use heterogeneous groups for children engaged in writing.

Parent involvement. It is also important for teachers to help parents understand the writing process. The letters to parents in the present study specifically helped one child, Mary, feel more comfortable about invented spellings. If parents understand that the message is more important than form and correct spelling, they can help to encourage their child's writing development. Teachers are advised to

give parents specific advice on how to help their child and to give praise for their efforts to write at home. If children initially start their journals on several different days, teachers will not be overwhelmed by writing thirty letters in one day. If introducing journals is done in three groups, over three days, for 30 children, a maximum of ten letters would need to be written per day, for three days. The cycle would reoccur every ten days. The invested time is worth the extra effort when letters encourage parents to allow their child to experiment with writing at home.

Motivation to write. Motivation for writing is maintained by a few simple techniques. Providing new journal booklets for writing was a source of excitement for each child. It is important for teachers to limit the size of the journals to about ten pages so that children can keep track of the number of books they have written. Covering each book with different colored construction paper is the easiest way to keep track of new journals (e.g., "Remember when I did a pink book about when our class went to the zoo?"). Receiving a new book every ten days is a high motivator for a young child.

Different writing tools also keep motivation at a high level. Colored markers are always popular, as are pens and thin pencils. Providing a sufficient supply of writing tools, several of each type and color, keeps disagreements

and time off-task to a minimum. Teachers are encouraged to have children experiment with different writing tools. Many avid writers in the present study changed from writing with markers to writing with pens when they discovered that they could fit more on each page. Another technique to assure that writing occurs is to divide the paper in half with a line and instruct the children to use half the paper for drawing and the other half for writing.

Dialogue writing. Dialogue writing by the teacher can be accomplished quickly by responding on the child's next page to the day's writing immediately after the child leaves the center. On the next day the child starts the new page by seeing and hearing the teacher's dialogue. Teacher's dialogues assist children in journal writing by promoting the importance of communicating a message. Dialogues written by an adult also provide a conventional form of English for the child to imitate in writing and to practice reading. Dialogues also reinforce personal interaction between the teacher and child.

Sharing. Informal sharing of ideas happens within the writing groups for each day. Ideas for new topics and themes are constantly being introduced and tested through interactions with self, peers, and adults. A teacher might allow children to share their narratives or stories as an optional activity, so that the entire class can benefit from

the many ideas of their peers and so personal narratives with the teacher are kept confidential.

In summary, in order to make journal writing in kindergarten a feasible, worthwhile activity the following recommendations are made. I would recommend that teachers use this method for a minimum of 2 months to achieve growth in most of the children. Children need to interact with self, peers, and adults while writing in order to plan writing that creates messages or stories and to fully develop their story. Teachers are encouraged to keep the groups flexible so that children having difficulty can benefit from interactions with peers who are not. Teachers should encourage parents to allow their children to write at home through letters sent home with each completed journal. Techniques such as the availability of various writing tools and different colored journals keep children's motivation for writing at a high level. Dialogues help the children model conventional print, create stories, and understand writing as a form of communication. Sharing can be used as an optional activity to give peers new ideas or themes.

Finally, journal writing in kindergarten has received scant attention. The present research goes beyond past studies of journal writing as drawing pictures and dictating stories to an adult to exploring the process of writing using journals and teacher responses to a child's writing.

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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



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